The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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CONTENTS

Help the Catholics of Spain!..... 397
Week by Week..... 398
Hunger March on Washington..... Joseph P. Kamp 401
The Congresses of Malines..Louis Van Houche 404
Sonnet (*verse*).....Lori Petri 406
The Primacy of Politics.....Edward Quinn 407
Cárdenas Stays Left.....Randall Pond 409
Thank You for the Wood.....Anonymous 411
While I Can See (*verse*).....Alex R. Schmidt 412
Communications..... 412
Seven Days' Survey..... 414
The Play.....Grenville Vernon 418
The Screen.....James P. Cunningham 418
Books.....Thomas F. Woodlock, Charlotte M. Meagher, Geoffrey Stone, Lincoln Reis, Bryan M. O'Reilly, Lucile Harrington..... 419

Previous issues of THE COMMONWEAL are indexed in the *Reader's Guide* and the *Catholic Periodical Index*.

HELP THE CATHOLICS OF SPAIN!

ACTING by the direction of Bishop Molloy, of Brooklyn, and the Board of Diocesan Consultors, the Brooklyn *Tablet,* the official organ of the great Brooklyn diocese, has opened a Spanish Relief Fund.

THE COMMONWEAL rejoices that at last the appalling indifference of American Catholics to the horrible sufferings of the Catholic people of Spain has been broken. It hopes and believes that now that an authorized movement to help the Spanish people, not to wage war, but to bind up their wounds, and to relieve their dreadful sufferings, has been made, the diocesan press in general, aided by all other Catholic publications, and Catholic societies, will follow the lead of the Brooklyn *Tablet,* which again, as on many other occasions, has acted with commendable practicality to make a real contribution to Catholic unity, and Christian charity.

By agreement with the *Tablet,* THE COMMONWEAL appeals urgently to its readers to aid the Spanish Relief Fund. Checks should be sent directly to the Spanish Relief Fund of the Brooklyn *Tablet,* 1 Hanson Place, Brooklyn, New York, or to THE COMMONWEAL, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City. All funds received by us will be forwarded to the *Tablet,* and sent to Cardinal Segura, and to a representative of the Spanish laity in Vatican City. As the *Tablet* says, in its editorial announcement, "Contributions for relief—and only relief—will not only assuage misery, but will encourage and stimulate the martyrs for liberty, will bless our own country, and will fully show we are all one family, Catholic at heart. . . . An acknowledgment will be sent to every contributor to this fine Catholic charity. It will be no war fund but just an aid to those scourged by the tyranny and butchery of the world's Reds."

The Catholics of England, of Ireland, and of other countries long ago swung into action to aid

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the Spanish Catholics with medical supplies, ambulances, surgeons, nurses, food and clothing—and prayers. No doubt thousands of American Catholics, if not millions, have also been praying. But faith that is not expressed in good works has never been recognized as the Catholic way to fulfil the duty of charity to the neighbor. The English Catholics, acting mainly through the *Universe,* of London, have already collected about $50,000, and have sent several fully equipped motor ambulances, and large supplies of surgical instruments and medicaments, to Spain. It is true that the European Catholics, because of their proximity to the scene of the holocaust of the Spanish Catholics, and because of their better knowledge of the Communist program, were in a better position than American Catholics to appreciate the realities of the Spanish situation, and to apply their knowledge in appropriate action. Nevertheless, we agree with the *Tablet* in its opinion that "it is very hard to understand the suicidal apathy of American Catholics in the face of the activities of the Reds." "Suicidal apathy" is the precise statement of a fact. If American Catholics wilfully hold themselves aloof from the sufferings and the perils of the Catholics of Spain, of Germany, of Mexico, and of other lands where the Church, through its living members, is being persecuted—where the Church will be exterminated if the persecutions succeed—then it will follow that American Catholics will certainly cease to be Catholics. That is spiritual suicide. And the remnant of faithful Catholics will then assuredly face, in due time, the same persecution, and the same danger of extermination, that now confronts the Catholics of Spain.

It should be remembered that the assault upon the Church in Spain did not come as a mere result of the revolt against the Azaña government led by the army chiefs. For months before the revolt the intention of the Communists—directly inspired and often led by Russian agents—and of the Anarchists, to seize absolute control of the so-called "Republican" government, and to wipe out the Church, was not only openly proclaimed, but was put into partial effect. As the *Tablet* says—and the facts are indisputable—"In March, April, May and June (the election was in February) the so-called 'Democratic' or 'Republican' government did nothing to interfere with the illegal, unconstitutional and inhuman attacks on the rights of the people." The radical parties, united in the Popular Front, led, at first, by Liberals, but dominated by the Reds, did not obtain a majority of the votes in the elections, but the system of proportional representation that prevailed gave them a majority of seats in the Cortes. But nothing save a sham form of representative democracy was set up. The real power was exercised by the Reds. During the first four months of this régime more than 300 political murders took place, 160 churches were destroyed, 63 centers of Catholic societies were confiscated, and 10 newspapers were suppressed. If revolution against tyranny can ever be justified—and the United States of America is built upon the principle that it can, and at times must, be justified if humanity is to preserve its liberty—certainly the revolt of the Spanish people against Communism and Anarchy, within the national life, and forced upon it from Russia, seems absolutely justifiable. But with that problem, the American people, including the Catholics, have little to do, except to aid the victims as much as they can. Are Catholics to fail in that duty, when American Communists, and American sympathizers with Spanish Anarchy (the most of them, we believe, deceived into identifying "democracy" with Communism and Anarchy) are freely and generously aiding the Spanish Reds? Surely, they will not fail. We urge our own readers to do their part.

Week by Week

The Trend of Events

MR. ROOSEVELT'S inauguration, distinguished by reason of a presidential address pledging the government to further efforts on behalf of the average citizen, was staged in a downpour of rain. This was disappointing; but perhaps it effectively reminded all of the catastrophe now menacing the well-being of hundreds of thousands in the Middle West. Floods damaging particularly to Louisville, Cincinnati, Nashville and surrounding towns are this year's sequel to past visitations. More than half of the United States has suffered gravely during the span of five years. The "disaster belt" runs from coast to coast, and the records are surprising as well as harrowing. There is no dependable defense against such visitations. Droughts on the great plains may be in part the consequence of unchecked erosion; floods can, of course, be controlled to some extent by engineering. But nature in her angry moods scoffs at every endeavor of man save his readiness to rescue and assist. The labor of officials and civilians to mitigate suffering and promote rehabilitation is a bright page in our history. It is by no means just a matter of money, though the success of the Red Cross in raising impressive sums is very admirable. The principal thing is the courage, the steady determination, the heroism which on such occasions proves the temper of the national soul. Such qualities assuredly demand emphasis in times which tend to lay too much stress on economic determinism. One cannot expect too much of them, but they do remain of signal importance.

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CANON DIMNET'S phrase that in Spain the Reds are too red, and the Whites too white, comes unfortunately very close to being the truth. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the real victims of the struggle are those who stood for moderation, wisdom and democracy in the true sense. The older friends of the Spanish republic, many sincere Catholics among them, have been slain as "traitors" or sent into exile. Others have tried as best they could to choose between the alternatives offered. We are convinced that most of the priests and religious who have fallen, sometimes after being subjected to merciless torture, were not partizans of any extremist idea. They were persons dedicated to the service of the Church, whose very meekness and unworldliness doomed them. It may well have seemed to them un-Christian to throw in their lot, militantly, with violence. Historically their failure was, perhaps, not to realize that in modern Europe safety can lie only in building up a strong central position for which one is prepared to fight, politically or otherwise. Extremes are everywhere balancing each other, and extremism is popular. But holding the center is difficult, nor could it always seem expedient. As things are now, one can only hope for the eventual triumph of a moderate position, which will assure freedom to the Church without the cost of swallowing too much tyranny. It seems to us that the world can aid Spanish Catholics in that fight more than is generally realized. First of all, it can respect and remember those who have died innocently in this terrible conflict. If the memory of such men is kept green, the future can profit by them. Secondly, it can—hard though it be—exercise moral judgment, refusing to endorse any kind of social suppression and at the same time condemning the brutal excesses of a materialistic revolution. Pressure of this sort from without has often mitigated catastrophes and curbed rancorous passion.

The Dilemma of Spain

MR. JOHN L. LEWIS apparently has unbounded confidence in friendly agreements. Otherwise he would scarcely have ventured to make so delicate an allusion to assistance rendered the President during the recent campaign. That generosity had, to be sure, a number of strings attached, concerning a number of which there has been considerable speculation in organized labor circles. But there was obviously no promise to get the C.I.O. out of every hole it managed to stumble into; and from every innuendo that such assurances had been given, the President adroitly extricated himself. This is an important historical fact, meriting attention quite apart from the issues at stake in the strike. The strength of the General Motors case reposes upon the legality of its actions. Contending that it has conformed with every law passed to date, the company argues that the striking union has violated a law. To reply that with the President on its side the United Automobile Workers possess a force and authority transcending the law may be grim and telling rebuttal, but it is obviously a threat that the conflict can be removed to terrain outside the jurisdiction of regular democratic procedure. This position Mr. Lewis further emphasized by insisting that the Supreme Court would nullify the National Labor Relations Act anyway. Here he was expressing in the form of a simple negation what General Motors has stated as a pious hope. They would like to have no such law to live up to; Mr. Lewis should like to act in a manner calculated to make that law unnecessary. It is an obvious conclusion that whether or not we have industrial peace with honor is sure to depend upon what manner of law we have and upon how they are enforced.

A Friendly Suggestion

THERE is perhaps nothing connected that one can say about a winter like this. But how let it go by without saying anything? It is as if a giant hand had twisted the map about, or picked it up bodily and let the pieces flutter down again into the wrong places: so many sections of the country seem to be getting the weather ordained for somewhere else. The Ohio Valley knows what it is to suffer from snow floods, or spring rains; but what is to be said of a weather schedule that sends spring rains at the time of the normal heaviest snowfall? Our own sector is accustomed to taking a severe drubbing, albeit a short one, from snow and cold; whereas the California fruit valleys have a winter climate that is proverbial for its paradisal mildness. Hence it comes about that we have had no winter at all hereabouts; the deer in the state parks have been browsing in the open all season, according to game wardens' reports, muskrats and mink have multiplied in unprecedented numbers — and any metropolitan New Yorker can go into Central Park and see for himself that the first spring buds are beginning on the bushes. On the other hand, a real tragedy threatens the citrus groves of the West, where it is estimated that the crop damage has already reached the figure of $60,000,000, another abnormal cold spell impends, and the growers—who have saved some of the crop this far by warming their orchards all night with fuel oil—now face a shortage of the oil because of congested transportation facilities. For all the progress of machine civilization, man is still weirdly dependent on the weather. When he gets weather as unpredictable as this, he understands very easily why simple old pagans propitiated the god

Strange Winter

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who blew too hard, or the one who sent down too much rain—or the Good Mother who made the fruits of the earth grow seasonally and well.

A Pipe Dream

ONE YOUNG man, having completed a period of arduous training, hit upon a theme for scholarly research. It was an important subject. The bearing upon Catholic history and culture was significant; the immediate impression upon the academic public generally was sure to be beneficent. As it happened, the young man was just moderately well off, and belonging as he did to the far-flung aggregation known as the laity hoped that sometime, somewhere, he might wed a charming girl and settle down. Ought he to abandon the project as a futile idea? Naturally he realized that foundations for any number of different kinds of research had been established. But though the officers in control of these funds were liberal gentlemen of considerable breadth of vision, they could not realize the whole significance of the theme selected and therefore would, in all probability, say "No." Then suddenly, through the good offices of Father ———, a wealthy person bequeathed a sum of money to endow "projects of research calculated to serve the intellectual interests of the Catholic body." The will had provided for able administration by a committee of distinguished and unselfish scholars. It was given some notice in the press as just another foundation, but to our young man it was a red-letter day in his career. He received a grant, completed the work, and felt better. We must add, however, that all this occurred in the year A. D. 2036.

Socialized Medicine?

A WARNING against compulsory health insurance, state and national, was sounded by the Medical Society of Westchester County, in terms which indicate the society's fear that such measures are just around the corner. A resolution directed to the American Medical Association by the society—the most venerable county association of physicians in the nation, by the way—urges upon the larger group the necessity of a public-education campaign to counter what it regards as a grave danger. It cites "the inevitable effects of such legislation upon the quality of medical care" and "the psychological and technical obstacles which almost certainly would render compulsory health insurance deleterious to health and unsound as insurance." Stating that medicine is "the last unfettered profession," it outlines the type of publicity requisite to keep it so, "by setting forth dramatically and accurately the story of medical progress" here and "explaining the foundations of future progress."

NO INFORMED reader will fail to understand and sympathize with the position taken by the society. It is true, as often reiterated, that the essence of sound and successful practising medicine is a personal relation between doctor and patient, a relation which stands in jeopardy as soon as the word "compulsory" is uttered. Not much imagination is needed to see the possibilities of abuse and deterioration, if the major control of a highly specialized profession, which has built up its standards and its jealous *esprit de corps* throughout a long history of pride and freedom, were taken from the profession itself and vested in state or national bureaus. But it is essential that all good physicians and true give some realistic attention to the factors which bring this danger so near. Modern medical treatment, despite the multiplication of free clinics and medical foundations, is still beyond the means of large masses of the people. That is the simple fact, which no stress on other facts, however important they may be, will obviate. Making public the great services of medicine, or sounding warnings against outside interference, will not affect the matter, unfortunately. If people in large numbers need something badly, and cannot get it, the tendency to "make a law" is almost irresistible.

Freedom of Trade

FOR A long time governments seemed to consider it their first duty to open up for individuals whatever means they wanted to use in amassing wealth and to assure them freedom to use these means to whatever extent they wanted, up to infinity. This is now considered a very soulless principle, or a heartless lack of principle. It apparently led to injustice and to war, and in the long run to the defeat of the very ideal of having citizens run up their wealth. It was the capitalist principle, but it has recently been widely debased. A disconcerting number of nations have lately been clamping down on the world-wide pursuit of pecuniary happiness. Nations have taken up ideals and halted the international trade of, among others, good Englishmen and good Americans. In international affairs it is no longer laissez-faire which seems the first cause of injustice, poverty and war. Secretary Hull and Mr. Walter Runciman, the White House's British visitor, seem quite right in reacting against all this new principle and looking for a freer flow of wealth. Bad principles, however invigorating they seem to people fainting away for lack of any at all, are still worse than none. It does seem hard, however, that the only practical way these leaders find to combat the new ideals of national military power, local cultural quarantine, and geographic class dominance, is a reversion to something that perhaps looked promising in the eighteenth century.

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HUNGER MARCH ON WASHINGTON

By JOSEPH P. KAMP

It is Mr. Kamp's contention that underneath many efforts to organize demonstrations of unemployed persons there is a persistent Communist quest for influence. In the following paper, he describes the Workers' Alliance, averring that the "brains" of this organization is Herbert Benjamin, well-known Communist organizer. We offer this essay as a statement of facts, subject to comment by our readers. The events it describes must be of interest to all as characteristic of the times.—The Editors.

DURING the past few weeks attention has been focused on demonstrations of WPA workers and unemployed, staged under the auspices of an organization which calls itself the Workers' Alliance. First, on January 9, there were mass rallies before city halls, state capitols, WPA offices, and public gathering places throughout the country, and then, on January 15, came an organized "march" to the seat of our national legislature.

Frankly admitting that the trip to Washington was an attempt to coerce Congress into granting "demands," spokesmen for the marchers sought to paint a sordid picture of privation, hunger and hardship among their followers, while insisting that the WPA be expanded and that relief workers be paid union wages. In order to impress a public always sympathetic to the plight of the unfortunate unemployed, the endeavor was characterized as a "hunger march" by its promoters.

"Hunger marches," so-called, have been the order of the day for the past five years or more. They have been formed as city, county, state and national demonstrations ever since Earl Browder, member of the Presidium of the Communist International and General Secretary of the American Communist party, in late 1930, directed the "organizing of meetings and mass demonstrations assuming demonstrative character in front of city halls and state legislatures." Very few of these mass exhibitions have been peaceful and orderly, while many, under the direction of first-rate organizers and agitators, attained alarming proportions, and, in numerous cases, were attended by violence, bloodshed and even death.

Those marches and demonstrations which have been free from disturbing incidents, in the past, were largely in those communities where the unemployed were organized in several non-cooperating groups. Now however, for the first time since the inception of the unemployment problem, the forces of disorder and unrest have united them in one mass movement, and, under Communist leadership, they may become a force to be reckoned with before the winter is over.

The march on Washington was only the signal for a renewed effort to arouse the rank and file of the masses to action. As the months go by, regardless of improving conditions and in spite of better times, there will be countless marches, demonstrations and strikes under the auspices and direction of the radical elements.

On April 13 last, 800 delegates, representing three separate organizations, met in Washington and merged their respective groups into one gigantic organization of the "unemployed" which was called the Workers' Alliance of America. Previously, there had been a Socialist "Workers' Alliance," a Communist group of "Unemployment Councils," and a "National Unemployed League" which was under the control of the Trotskyite-Communists. In the new organization they pooled their resources, membership and publicity outlets to effect an efficient agitation and propaganda machine.

David Lasser, a Socialist Left-winger who earned his spurs as a propagandist for Marxism among the unemployed, was chosen as national chairman of the merged groups. Not having been identified with any ultra-radical activity in the past, he was considered to be a suitable figurehead. Herbert Benjamin, Communist agitator and former leader of the Unemployment Councils, was named as the national organizer, and Angelo Herndon, Negro Communist leader, convicted and under sentence in Georgia on the charge of "insurrection," became national vice-chairman.

While Lasser is nominally the "national chairman," and along with the "executive board" is supposed to shape the destinies of the organization, it is Benjamin who directs its activities and who determines what its policies shall be. That he is the "brains" of the movement, Benjamin modestly admits in an article in the April, 1936, issue of the *Communist,* official Red magazine.

Benjamin has for years been extremely active as a Communist organizer, and is a member of the Central Committee of the Communist party. In 1932, he was a power behind the scenes in the bonus army occupation of Washington; in 1933, he had charge of the hunger march on the same city; in 1934, he again directed the organization of a national hunger march; and, in 1935, on instructions from the Comintern, he devoted his time to the task of amalgamating the "unemployed" organizations.

The idea of consolidating radical gains in the ranks of the unemployed and of combining the

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various Red groups under the control and domination of Communist leadership was not new. The czars of American Communism had it in mind from the very beginning of their activity among the unemployed. Even at the time the Communist Unemployment Councils adopted a constitution, Benjamin wrote a foreword in which he said:

> We aim to establish a united front that will embrace all workers' organizations and lead to the necessary unification of all existing organizations into one mighty organization.

Now that the "mighty organization" with a membership of over 800,000 is an established fact, and Benjamin sits in the saddle, it is more than probable that he will do his utmost to carry out his own plans. He said in 1934:

> We build a movement that demands rights and begs no favors; that does not plead but fights; that does not make deals but exerts organized pressure. Our success depends upon the initiative which the masses develop in action.

But the initiative of the masses was not permitted to develop of its own accord. There has been plenty of incitement on the part of Benjamin and his coterie and the antagonism of the masses, over which they hold sway, has been directed principally against the government. A manifesto issued by Benjamin declares bluntly:

> We state to all workers that the national government, the city and state governments are their enemies. . . . Line up in the battle against the enemy class . . . when you strike a blow, make the enemy stagger.

The police, as a conspicuous arm of government, have, in the past, been singled out for special attention. Abuse has been heaped upon them and they have been the victims of violence whenever Communist-led mobs have heavily outnumbered the forces of the law.

In this season's hunger marches the participants are being and will continue to be exhorted to show their contempt for the authorities, just as the official "hunger march statement" of the Communists declared in challenging language:

> We march in the face of bitter hostility of all forces of the ruling class; through lines of professional sluggers and gunmen (police) clothed with the authority of the state.

One element in the new set-up, the Trotskyite-Communists, have staged demonstrations of the unemployed solely for the purpose of "keeping the local cops busy," according to a statement by Anthony Ramuglia, president of their Unemployed League. He also explained:

> Action of this sort will weld together the unemployed movement. Out of the crucible of action will be born a unified organization that will propel the unemployed movement up to the front ranks of the class struggle in America.

There is no question that the unified radical unemployed movement is in the forefront of the ranks of the class war today. With its Communist officer-personnel and with the open cooperation of Communist District Organizers and local leaders it has managed to gather under its control a large portion of the unemployed and WPA workers and it is rapidly inculcating in them a hatred for the established order and a belief that Communism, and Communism alone, can solve their problems.

During the past several months, the Workers' Alliance has received considerable material support from the Communist party in the form of financial assistance, free office space and meeting rooms in various Communist headquarters, and, perhaps most important of all, the use of the Communist press and their printing establishments for the publication of pamphlets, leaflets and dodgers.

All this is easily understandable when it is realized that the Communists are merely helping themselves, and their "cause." The official party monthly, the *Communist,* in its October, 1936, issue declares:

> Our task is to strengthen the united movement of the unemployed represented by the Workers' Alliance of America.

By way of reciprocation the Alliance endorsed Communist Earl Browder for the presidency.

Taking its activity to date as a gage, the new organization is following closely in the footsteps of the old Communist Unemployment Councils. In the early months of their agitation the Communists were responsible for riots and organized violence in almost every industrial city of any size in the country. Despite the police, they "crashed the gates" of hundreds of legislative sessions in cities, counties and states, including meetings of the New York Legislature, the Buffalo City Council, the Battle Creek City Commission, and countless others. In Seattle, Washington, they literally "captured" the City-County Building and occupied it for some ten days until the combined police and fire departments and special deputies were mobilized to evict them.

At Trenton, New Jersey, last summer, 3,000 hunger marchers were incited by Alliance organizers to seize the State Capitol, which they held for over a week before relinquishing possession to the state authorities. Even then, the marchers thronged the galleries and hurled epithets and cat-calls at the representatives in session below. Two of the leaders, Ray Cook and John Spain, were members of the national executive board of the Alliance. The New York *Times* quotes Spain as describing the actions of his followers as both "insurrection" and a "revolutionary rehearsal."

The same stunt was tried a few weeks later at the Chicago City Hall, but after attempting to

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take possession of the mayor's office the marchers were dispersed with tear gas bombs. In St. Louis, they were more successful when, in September, a march converged on the Council Chamber and held possession for several days. Now, the Alliance repeats previous Communist performances in staging a march on Washington.

In reading about a hunger march of WPA workers and unemployed in the daily press, the public is inclined to vision a small army of starving and ragged but nevertheless deserving citizens, unemployed through no fault of their own, journeying under difficulty and severe hardship to petition for sorely needed relief. This is not a true picture.

To begin with, "hunger march" is a misnomer. The marchers are not hungry; neither do they march. The majority are well fed and a goodly number are well-paid radical organizers and agitators. Many are employed and the marches are arranged on week ends, when possible, so as not to interfere with their jobs. The march is an excursion, in their own cars, to some, and to those who go as passengers, it is an exciting adventure. To many of the youngsters who take part in the demonstrations and form a fair percentage of the marchers, it is "the thrill of a lifetime."

These marchers neither suffer hunger nor other privation because of lack of ready money. During one of the jaunts to the nation's capital engineered by Benjamin, interesting sidelights were uncovered. Take, for example, a disclosure that was made when the marchers stopped to demonstrate in Wilmington and a riot developed. A few of the unemployed were arrested and at the police station, on being searched, one of them was found to have over $500 in his pockets. And, on the same subject, a reporter for a New York newspaper wired in this story:

> From a bankroll the size of a head of cabbage Benjamin paid incidental expenses here [Washington] for his followers. His money was crisp new notes and when asked where he got it he laughed: "There's plenty of money behind our march to Washington."

That Benjamin was telling the truth is evidenced by the fact that each of the marchers received $5 for spending money in addition to having all expenses paid; that the leaders traveled by airplane; that the drivers of participating trucks received $15 per day plus all expenses including meals and hotel bills; that trucks were hired for as much as $40 per day; and that the organizers and many of the marchers stopped in first-class hotels. (In the latest "marches" they paraded in New York with $10,000 worth of floats and banners executed in the accepted Communist tradition, and traveled to Washington by special trains, where again, as in previous years, taxis were used to convey these "unemployed" about the capital.)

Another news dispatch to a New York evening paper described the situation in this fashion:

> With a suite of rooms at the expensive Hotel Raleigh . . . where comely Communist girls lounge about like a Follies troupe in a tryout, Benjamin has been living the life of Riley while he prepared for his Red invasion.

The national government and officials of every community are doing their utmost and in a great many cases going even beyond the law and reason in providing for the needy. The Red elements, themselves, know that their apparent solicitude, even if it were sincere, is entirely uncalled-for. They know that it is unnecessary to compel the humanitarian heart of America to extend succor to the unfortunate victims of circumstance.

There is, nevertheless, a real reason for their sensational activities. They glory in the distress and bitter experience of the unemployed. To them, unemployment and its attendant evils is a manifestation of the decay of our present system of society and government. They hope that, in dramatizing the situation, they will win converts for the "cause."

Communist activity among the unemployed began on orders from the Communist International and when the first Red organization was set up for them it was not an American body in any sense of the word. No one in this country had any say-so as to how the movement was to be constituted. The Unemployment Councils were mere branches of a Soviet affiliate, the Red International of Labor Unions.

In July of 1930 the executive bureau of this organization sent the following orders from Moscow:

> Red International Labor Union adherents must, by means of energetic and revolutionary work, lead the whole movement politically and organizationally, in order to finally turn these millions of unemployed into a firm consolidated force for overthrowing capitalism.

In interpreting the instructions of the Communist International and the R. I. L. U., Earl Browder, in his first message to the unemployed, declared:

> Unemployment can only be finally abolished by the abolition of capitalism. And capitalism can only be abolished by the working class overthrowing the state power of the capitalist class to replace it with a workers' government—the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rule of the propertyless people.

The marches, strikes and mobilizations now being staged and organized are not and will not be demonstrations of the bona fide unemployed, as such. They are merely carefully planned moves in the strategic campaign of the Communists to overthrow the government of the United States and set up in its stead a Soviet America.

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THE CONGRESSES OF MALINES

By LOUIS VAN HOUCHE

THE BISHOPS of Belgium have called meetings of Catholics, both foreign and Belgian, priests and laymen, since 1863; and from 1909 onward, women as well as men have been included. These meetings are known throughout the world as the Congresses of Malines. Catholics of influence in their milieu owing to their vocational activity or to their scholarship have thus an opportunity of expounding their views on the needs of the day.

These meetings are not summoned at regular intervals, but as occasion demands. For instance, a political party created just before the first Catholic Congress attempted to secularize public life and institutions. Catholics were reluctant to stop this movement by practising their civil rights. The Congress of 1863 succeeded in encouraging them to claim the privilege of their citizenship.

The Congress held in 1891, the year of the publishing of the encyclical, "Rerum Novarum," was responsible for the creation of the Christian trade unions. The fifth meeting was called in 1909 by the late Cardinal Désiré Mercier, and it was the starting point of organized Catholic Action among youth. The national head office entrusted with the coordination of all the Catholic women's groups was also launched there. All these institutions are the basis of the freedom and of the future of religion in Belgium.

Since the war, expediency prevails both in public and private affairs instead of leadership; cracks and crevices in the economic structure are many. Blind conservatism prevents Catholic employers and well-to-do from putting in practise the ideas of the social encyclicals. People, all the world over, are asking themselves: "Is it better for us to have God as the cornerstone of the world of tomorrow or to be godless?" The Catholic Congress of 1936 was summoned to impress on public opinion that today the Gospel should still be the prime influence amongst individuals and nations.

At the call of the bishops of Belgium, 11,000 foreigners and Belgians came to attend the morning and afternoon sessions of the four-day meeting in September, 1936, and to hear Catholic leaders speak in an all-embracing cultural, social and religious program. The meetings took place in Malines (Mechlin), the seat of the Belgian Primate. The 11,000 who entered their names for the meetings were divided into two series of ten committees with subdivisions to study about 500 reports. The committees discussed religious life, organized Catholic Action, public affairs, the family, education, teaching, literature and the arts, economic, social and vocational life, public and private charity and health, the press, cinema, radio, and colonial problems. All members of committees were permitted to take part in the debates. Conclusions expressed as "wishes" were elaborated, but neither "resolutions" nor "votes" were passed.

It is noteworthy that Hegel's, Taine's and Auguste Comte's influence is no longer preponderant with the faithful. The philosophy of Saint Thomas of Aquin has won a growing ascendancy with them. Non-Catholic observers acknowledged the salutary action of the Church and the calm common will of Catholics to face the problems put before the Church.

Among the most interesting sections was that on religious life. The falling away from the Faith in Belgium was imputed mainly to the gap between the Church and the ideas and feelings prevailing since the Reformation and the French Revolution. It was proposed to make use of the power of adaptability of the Church so that she would be admitted by the people to be "all things" to them. Catholics should therefore understand more thoroughly than now the spirit and the needs of the different classes of people. This aim was admitted to be very difficult to attain in crowded cities, owing to the absence of contact between priests and inhabitants. Irreligion and lack of interest in religion prevalent in the big centers are exercising a baleful influence on the poor and on those coming from the country.

Among the farming population individualism and routine traditionalism hold faith captive. Thousands of souls packed in the cities present different problems to the priests than a population scattered over a country village does to its pastor. In the big cities the works and activities of the parish need to be coordinated in such a way that every inhabitant is regularly visited. The key of this cooperation is a secretary's office for the keeping of records. In the industrial centers, all social and charitable works should be coordinated and operated on a strictly religious basis, under the leadership of the parish priests.

In the farming areas the proposed means of the apostolate were: visits to the farmers by the parish priests, publishing of a parish weekly bulletin, improvement of the church services, choice of the most fitting time for high Mass, avoiding times of public amusement. Every opportunity should be taken to impress on the farmers that the

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parish is the tie by which they are united to the whole Catholic Church. Farmers should be regularly informed of the events happening in the Catholic world. These are some of the measures which were proposed. Their efficacy depends on the training of those who carry them out.

A sustained effort to adapt the teaching of religion to the present day was proposed. The teaching methods in use develop the feeling that religion is a kind of rational system, a mere set of ideas and practises. They do not point out in an impressive way that religion is all-embracing, a commanding factor of daily life. The teaching and study of the catechism should be less scholastic, less drawn from the heads and books than from the heart. The lessons should be given outside the church and possibly in a special room. The abstract notions, the apprehension of good and evil, should not only be didactically elucidated but also applied in explanations of the most striking passages both of the Old and the New Testament, in order to spiritualize the teaching. As each Belgian ecclesiastical province has a catechism of its own, it was suggested to adopt a single catechism as Germany has done. An exhibition of catechetical books and teaching materials was organized by the Centrale de Documentation Catéchétique. The Jesuits at Louvain have a permanent exhibition open to all. The catechetical exhibition at Malines comprised French, Flemish and German books and teaching materials.

In Belgium the prime importance of catechetical teaching is due to the lack of a family atmosphere favoring the religious education of children. This lack appears in the insufficient preparation of young children who receive Holy Communion.

Similar wishes were expressed in regard to sermons, which are at present not sufficiently adapted to the capability and needs of hearers.

It is necessary to insist more and more on the homely applications of the Faith and on the great need of the faithful for prayer and sacraments. The teaching of religion is not confirmed, as it should be, by liturgy. To the public, liturgy is too much a formal matter and suffers therefore a great prejudice. To restore it to the masses and to increase its influence on souls it should be more fully explained, for instance, by the publication of a simplified missal. Nobody dares claim that he is able to read during the Mass the full text of it in his missal. People attending the church services should be progressively trained, first to respond in a loud voice and all together at the essential parts of the Mass, and secondly to sing.

In short, religious life is not a geometrical theorem but it is a life to be lived. Priests need to adapt themselves continuously to the present day and keep alive their zeal to save souls. They must be steeped in the highest spirituality. Then their explanations of the catechism and their sermons will be easily understood by their audience, and the spirit of laymen trained by them to help them in their pastorate will have something of the zeal of Our Redeemer.

Organized Catholic Action constituted a special section. It was ascertained that none of the texts used in the seminaries and by the priesthood dealt with Catholic Action. The curriculum of the seminaries does not include it. These manuals and the curriculum have to be revised in order to fill in these gaps in the training of priests. The Canon Law does not yet include a single clause on Catholic Action, even in the edition published by Cardinal Gasparri. There are but a few lines on this subject in his Catholic Catechism. Monsignor Picard, ordained in 1936 general chaplain of Catholic Action for men in the French-speaking part of Belgium, expressed his conviction that sooner or later Catholic Action would become part and parcel of the Canon Law. In urgent terms he asked the Belgian hierarchy to have it taught in the seminaries and to put it in manuals for the priests.

As the special task of Catholic Action was described as the coordination of all the activities in the parish dealing with the press, cinema, radio, and decency in public places, and as the importance and the need for extending Catholic Action was not yet fully agreed on by the faithful as a whole, a systematic campaign was proposed to convince priests and laymen of its bearing and present value.

In submission to the hierarchy, the boards of Catholic Action in Belgium will take any steps calculated to secure for it, both in scientific and educational fields, the emphasis it deserves.

To control and to guide the whole apostolic activity of the Church, it has been recognized that religious statistics are all important. Therefore, as is already done in other countries, accurate statistics should be kept in Belgium. Warnings were sounded against misconstruction and misrepresentation of statistical data.

The meetings of the section for religious life were crowded; two-thirds of the members were laymen, a sign that there is the keenest interest in the spread of the Faith in Belgium, and that religion here is no longer considered as the exclusive field of the priesthood. Local congresses assembling from time to time and parish meetings were planned to study problems presented to the big Congress of Malines.

In the public life section stress was laid on the duty of Catholic laymen to act as such at every opportunity in their vocational and public life. Never, since the accession to the throne of Emperor Constantine, has the fate of the Faith rested with the laymen to so great an extent as now. The present and the future of the Church is within

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their control. This statement was the most striking one uttered during the Congress. In Spain and in Mexico, laymen did not realize their determining influence in public and private affairs. Their failing is the reason for the actual conditions in both countries. Catholic employers and employees, engineers and workers, chairmen of boards and shareholders may, by the way in which they understand and fulfil their tasks, jeopardize religion. People say: "Look at the Catholics; they do not act as such." Economic and social life is so organized that priests no longer are in touch with the people, so the people can only appreciate the beneficial influence of the Faith through the daily life of Catholics in offices and plants. Priests have no voice in the boardrooms of companies, in the management of trusts or in the workshops. Zero hour has struck for the laymen. Is Christian civilization being shipwrecked, or does it bear in itself the means to its revival?

Owing to the growing intervention of public power in economic and social life, the Congress of Malines insisted strongly on the prime necessity for Catholic laymen to be united and strongly organized on the political, economic and social plane. If they do not succeed in grouping their efforts and their influences as citizens, Christian institutions and religious freedom will soon be things of the past in Belgium.

The sessions of the social section disclosed that too many Catholics in this country still put in the foreground philanthropic work instead of social justice. The social encyclicals do not yet enjoy here the popularity they have encountered in the United States.

Physicians, theologians, educators, parents joined in the section devoted to the family. Birth control was debated. It was stated that the maximum number of children beyond which the health of the mother would be imperiled cannot be fixed. This number varies with the constitution of the woman, the intervals between the births and, last but not least, the help the mother receives in the fulfilment of her maternal task. The maximum number may depend on the earnings of the family, on its social situation, or on the room available.

At the section on literature and art, the necessity to be cognizant of every past and present culture was stressed. Both of Belgium's historic cultures should be enjoyed by all, and not solely the French, as has been the case up to now. The proposal was made to have the Walloon language taught in the schools, to publish Walloon literature and to study folklore—and this from the national as well as the religious point of view. Walloons, furthermore, ought to read Flemish literature. On a more general plane, every Catholic should know and understand both cultures. The aim of the intellectual training of the woman should be the understanding of the vocational life of her husband and children and the ability to supplement the specialization of their professional training. Religious art formation requires more care than is given to it. The lack of education in art appears most strikingly in the ornamentation of churches. They need to be built of natural materials, not of artificial stones or imitation metals, in order to give them an appearance of sincerity and simplicity. Style and ornamentation should not break with art and traditions. In the ornamentation everything either superfluous or which is not fitted to glorify God and to create a calming atmosphere should be avoided. The priest should be trained in art according to these standards.

A mass meeting was held in Brussels on September 13, 1936, to conclude the Congress. It was opened by a pontifical Mass celebrated by Cardinal Hlond, Primate of Poland, and was attended by four other cardinals, numerous bishops and 200,000 people. This was the biggest crowd ever assembled in Belgium. They sang the plain song of the Mass in perfect and impressive unison. After the Mass the crowd moved to the stadium, where a stage presentation of the Creed was made. The assembly joined in the singing, either in Flemish or in French, of the Creed, the Confiteor and "Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat." The stage covered over an acre and the presentation required 2,500 players, all members of Catholic Action. In response to the address of the Cardinal Archbishop of Belgium the attending faithful spontaneously took the oath to fight for the Faith, even to the peril of their lives, following the example of the early martyrs.

The teaching of the Belgian Catholic Congress of 1936 was that if the Catholics do not take their due part in the building of the world of tomorrow, it will be built in opposition to God.

Sonnet

Always, beneath my touch, the saintly cloth
Has fallen from a dingy mortal limb,
The luminous pinion proven but a moth,
Enhanced by eyes that longed for seraphim.
Somewhere, I know, above a misted height
Where roams the unicorn with snowy foal,
Rises that peak, in everlasting light,
Whose paths wind netherward into my soul.

Have I not seen its shadow on the world,
Softened to colors that the blood can bear,
When mountains, as the chastened day was furled,
Cut unto heaven a somber velvet stair,
And touched a cloud's pink cheek in sky so blue
It burned as rapture, running into hue?

LORI PETRI.

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THE PRIMACY OF POLITICS

By EDWARD QUINN

IN A RECENT issue of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, an article entitled "Macchiavelli oder das Primat des Politischen" was devoted to showing that the *idée-maitresse* of that Renaissance thinker, the decisive accomplishment which secured for him world-fame and a lasting influence on the course of history, was his doctrine of the primacy of politics. The writer indicates the course of that influence up to the present day and makes clear the tremendous results of it in the history of Europe. He does not, however, express directly his own sympathy with this doctrine nor does he indicate its relevance to the present time, though both these things are implied. He explains that Frederick the Great of Prussia, attacking Machiavelli's doctrine when he was a young man, failed to bring out this essential principle and condemned him for views which Machiavelli held indeed, but only as a result of this fundamental doctrine. He goes on to say that, later in life, Frederick withdrew his earlier criticism, and quotes with apparent sympathy and understanding Frederick's words, "Machiavelli said that an unselfish power, situated between two ambitious ones, must finally be destroyed. I'm afraid I must admit that Machiavelli was right." In using these words at a time when Germany is complaining about encirclement by France and Russia and by putting the article in a daily newspaper the writer also makes it clear that he realizes that this is a very actual question.

There can be little doubt about the writer's own views, there can be none about the relevance of this matter in Europe today. For it is precisely the influence of this pernicious doctrine of "politics first" which prevails almost everywhere and threatens to destroy at no very distant date the old civilization of that continent. In almost every country in Europe the first considerations in the ordering of the lives of the community are political; family rights, the rights of the individual and the dignity of the human personality, the authority of the Catholic Church and the force of Christian principles are all secondary to questions of politics, when they are not absolutely subordinated to the latter. Even greater is the respect paid to this principle when the nations come to consider their relations toward one another; the primacy of foreign politics is even more obvious than the primacy of domestic politics.

Soviet Russia exhibits the logical conclusion of this doctrine; the absolutism of the Machiavelli-inspired kings led to the French Revolution and the rise of Liberalism, and in the abuses of Liberalism, Communism has its origin. It is true that Communism appeals to economic need as a reason for revolution, but when revolution is successful, as in Russia, economics are quickly subordinated to politics and both are regarded as holding a primacy over religion. Religion was persecuted from the beginning and is excluded by the whole theory of Communism, and at an early date economics became a secondary consideration. Instead of being asked to risk all and to sacrifice himself for the needs of his class, the Russian worker was urged to give himself entirely to the building up of the socialist state—a political aim, the fulfilment of which would mean the satisfaction of all other human desires (which in Communist ideology can only be material). Russia became frankly nationalist after the rise of a hostile National-Socialist dictator near her own borders and fostered revolution abroad, not in order to release the worker from oppression but to distract attention from herself; in the furthering of this political aim any means may be used, good or evil; governments which approve of Soviet Russia are to be supported and those which oppose her to be brought down by revolutionary activity; the enemies of Communism may be used as allies in countries where they suffer from a common enemy and where they are on the side of the hostile power they are to be ruthlessly attacked.

This is the very language of Machiavelli. At home, because politics are first, the most brutal measures can be adopted against those considered to be enemies of the régime. It seems now that after the periods first of internationalism and then of nationalism, Soviet Russia is entering upon an imperialist stage. And this too means the primacy of politics. That seems the only possible explanation of Russian interference in Spain and her persistent saber-rattling, for the latter must only render her more liable to attack and the former cannot possibly be accepted as the result of a sincere desire to assist the oppressed Spanish proletariat nor even merely as a means of obtaining an ally against the Fascist powers. It can only be that the old desire of the Russian people to fulfil a mission to Europe and the world, the desire which found satisfaction in naming Moscow the third Rome, in succession to the oldest Rome in Italy and the newer Rome which was Byzantium, is being revived again. That desire, born in a time of schism and assiduously cultivated even by those who seceded from the Orthodox Church, never had much that was spiritual or religious about it. Today it is frankly atheistic and materialistic, but

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primarily political. Soviet Russia is striving after the political hegemony of Christendom—a Christendom bewildered and divided and largely dechristianized through the influence of Machiavelli.

Nazi Germany, which claims to be the defender of Christendom, is only second to Russia in following out the Machiavellian principle, and appeals to it even more explicitly. The free spirit of art is brought under the restrictions of the political power, which recently forbade all adverse criticism within the borders of the Reich and pointed to the *Führer's* political achievements as one of the greatest works of art. The spiritual is subordinated to the political, or rather the political sphere is regarded as supremely spiritual. Nothing the Church can give is comparable to the spiritual values of National-Socialist politics. When she offers her assistance against the common enemy of Bolshevism, her appropriate spiritual weapons are not even considered and her failure to suppress Bolshevism when she had political power is recalled; her offers are scornfully rejected but, by an excess of mercy, the political power promises to defend the religious, provided always that the latter keeps to its proper sphere.

Since politics are supreme, the Church cannot presume to assert the moral principles which are to guide politicians, much less can she denounce those who transgress them. It is not surprising that Hitler's meeting with Cardinal Faulhaber ended in failure; it could only have been successful if either had been prepared to give up their whole *Weltanschauung,* which for the *Führer* would have meant abandoning the primacy of politics. In foreign politics, the thought of Germany, as Machiavelli's selfless state surrounded by powerful neighbors, is predominant. Threatened by the Franco-Russian agreement, Germany tries to create a new encirclement on the same lines and she and Japan are two ambitious powers which threaten a third; in this instance however the threatened nation cannot be regarded as unselfish. But, precisely because all these powers admit the common Machiavellian doctrine, it is not impossible that Russia and Germany may yet be drawn into strange alliance against the rest of Europe in defense of the primacy of politics. More unexpected events have come to pass in the course of history and already it is said that the General Staffs of both countries would welcome an agreement, in spite of the wild bombast and mutual curses of the political leaders.

What of the rest of Europe, threatened by this unholy alliance? There too the doctrine of the primacy of politics holds sway, even if it is less obvious, and weakens Christendom before the inevitable and probably universal conflict. In a pregnant phrase, in the London *Observer* for Sunday, November 29, Mr. J. L. Garvin summed up the situation, "The schisms of white civilization are deepening." Those schisms at home and abroad are largely created by political conflict, by parties who agree at least in this, that politics hold first place.

In the democratic countries the conflict is clearly to be seen and is destroying that solidarity of nations which is an integral part of the European order. One may deplore the fact but one cannot help admiring the manner in which Mr. H. G. Wells recently gave expression to it, in a debate at Chatham House, on the future of the League of Nations: "I think the young are anarchistic, communistic, 'Nazi.' The way they can be put into shirts and taught a sort of solidarity for which they are hungry, is the most ominous thing in the world at present." There is also in England (of which Mr. Wells was principally speaking) a tendency toward a benevolent totalitarianism and a gentle subordination of the individual and the family life to political aims. France is more than ever the scene of confusion through the clash of diverse political programs and all parties are trying to save the country by taking the dangerous path of pure politics. The old fear of Germany gave rise to political alliance with Europe's worst enemy, and the formation of the Popular Front government, which may yet wreck France as it has almost ruined Spain, was an attempt at a solution of that country's ills based on the doctrine of the primacy of politics. For the sake of preserving the political independence which they gained in 1919, the members of the Little Entente are prepared to ally themselves with the enemies of order and to hamper all attempts on the part of Austria and Hungary to arrange their affairs in accordance with national tradition and the best interests of Europe as a whole. The return of the Christian Hapsburgs is to be regarded as a *casus belli,* alliance with anti-Christian Russia as a contribution to peace. There is uncertainty in England, confusion in France, disorder in Central Europe through putting politics first. But there is order in Italy.

In Italy, politics hold first place, at least in principle, and Fascist theory (so far as it can be ascertained, for Fascism does very little theorizing) ascribes to politics the highest spiritual values and subordinates the individual to the State. In practise, there has been disagreement with the Church. But Italian Fascism is vastly different from the German brand and the assertion of the spiritual even in this way is at once an advance on Liberalism and a challenge to materialistic Communism; and, consistently or otherwise, the Fascist power has given to the Church freedom and a prestige which it never enjoyed under the rule of a "tolerant" Liberal government. It seems certain that in a struggle for the maintenance of the Christian order in Europe, Fascist Italy would be found on the right side. On that side too would

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be found Austria and Portugal, two small countries with little material power, who are trying to dethrone Machiavelli at least in home affairs and to establish an order in which politics are subordinated to Christian principle. These three powers at least would stand for the maintenance of the spiritual and the Christian influence in Europe and for the destruction of the Machiavellian régime as Russia and, perhaps, Germany would stand for the maintenance of the latter and the destruction of the former. Whether the struggle will take a violent form or not and what will be its outcome largely depends on the attitude of the remaining states of Europe. It also depends in no small degree on the result of the Spanish war.

In Spain it is precisely this issue of whether politics shall hold first place or not that is being fought out amidst scenes of horror, which are nothing to compare with the scenes which will take place over the whole of Europe if it once becomes necessary to appeal on a wider scale to the arbitrament of war. There is in Spain at least a strong and fierce opposition to the reign of Machiavelli and it seems now certain that this opposition will prevail, but only after the most intense suffering and bloodshed. One may well admit that there have been excesses and dishonest intentions on both sides, without denying the epic character of the struggle, an epic so much nobler than those of Greece and Rome as the Christian civilization is nobler than the classical.

In other countries too there is opposition to Machiavellian governments, not less sincere if less obvious than that in Spain. Millions have suffered in Russia for denying the primacy of politics, but there are already signs that their suffering, however long it may still endure, is not in vain. Man is being recognized for what he is, not a mere economic or political unit but a spiritual being, with a natural love of home and country; it cannot be long before the rediscovery of man leads to the acknowledgement of the supremacy of religion. In Germany too there is still hope that good Christian and patriotic men and women may prevail upon their leaders to admit the primacy of the spiritual, even though by so doing they also admit to inconsistency. Elsewhere the leaven of Catholic Action, authoritatively excluded from the sphere of politics, is at work and is weakening gradually the power of Machiavelli over the modern world. But the struggle persists and suffering continues, for nothing of supreme value for mankind and for the glory of God was ever born without strife and pain. However long that struggle continues, in what fierce, undreamed-of forms, the end of it is certain. Politics cannot always come first. It may be that a gigantic effort, made at once by apostles who generously accept every suffering which God may send for Europe's sake, will succeed in dethroning Machiavelli; or it may be that we shall have to witness and participate in the most awful struggle of civilizations, in which life and everything we hold dear will have to be sacrificed, in which the European order may pass away. Either way, it means the end of the primacy of politics.

CARDENAS STAYS LEFT

By RANDALL POND

LAZARO CÁRDENAS has been President of Mexico for something over two years. Most of his time in office has been filled with sensational activities, discourses, and journeys around the country. (In reference to these journeys, it is estimated that the President has not remained in the capital for a solid month since he was inaugurated.) Dotting those two turbulent years are such memorable events as the break with Calles, followed by the latter's exile; the hypocritical olive branch gesture toward the Church question, with unfruitful results; the unconstitutional expulsion of General Rodríguez, Fascist chieftain; the clash with Monterrey businessmen; the open alliance with the reddest of the labor groups, Lombardo Toledano's C. T. M. (Confederation of Mexican Workers).

Cárdenas came into power as a Calles puppet in good standing. How he threw off the guiding strings of the former "Iron Man" and began to put into practise the "Six Year Plan" of the National Revolutionary party (which it never intended to follow) has been detailed in these pages. The question now is: What has been the presidential attitude these past six months and will the Leftist trend continue? The facts presented below will, I believe, answer the question and will fully justify the title of this article.

One of the strongest indications of the President's Leftist way of government is his support of Azaña in Spain. Mexico alone, of all the countries in the world, made no secret of the arms and ammunition which she shipped across the Atlantic to Barcelona, not once, but at least three times. It is reliably reported also that machine guns were bought in the United States, ostensibly for "the Mexican government," and then reshipped from Vera Cruz to the loyal forces in Spain.

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Several members of the Spanish proletarian militia came into the country recently and have been wined and dined and feted as though they were a new species of European royalty. On the side, they collect funds for the "democratic régime" in the *madre patria.* All were implicated in a scandalous diplomatic incident when a crowd of Azaña sympathizers stoned the embassy of Guatemala and the legation of El Salvador. The only reason advanced for this action was that the two governments had recognized Franco's rebel forces. The culprits were set free, despite protests lodged with the Secretary of Foreign Affairs by representatives of the two nations.

This Mexican pro-Azaña feeling does not extend very far outside of government circles. The great majority of all classes were outraged at the activities of Spanish Leftists, particularly their assaults on churches and convents. Six brilliant articles by José Vasconcelos, which appeared some weeks ago in *El Hombre Libre,* limned the origins of the Spanish struggle in courageous tones and Mexico received his words with eagerness. Love for the old country, plus a feeling of protest against Mexican taxes being used to support a Red government, are the keys to public opinion on Spain.

On three home "fronts" Cárdenas has lived up to advance notices that he would attempt radical changes. Business in general has received so many blows from various quarters that the government may be wondering, one of these days, what happened to the taxes that used to roll in so gaily. The new expropriation law, which allows the President to confiscate any property whatsoever if he deems it necessary for "the social good," has had a paralyzing effect, at least temporarily, on real estate transactions, building construction, and rural property turnover.

Strikes of all kinds, ranging from the electric power walkout which cost the nation 100,000,000 pesos in business last summer to a strike of house servants in certain apartment buildings, have resulted in bitter criticism of the President's labor policy. As a general rule, this policy might be summed up in the phrase, "The worker is always right." It is a truism in Mexican business that no employer ever receives a favorable decision from a labor arbitration board.

Agrarian affairs are in a similar muddled state. Seemingly bent on destroying all governmental sources of income, Cárdenas has descended on the rich Laguna region, located around Torreon, Coahuila, and has partitioned it among the *campesinos.* Over 200,000 hectares of land have been distributed to 25,000 farm laborers, who will perform their duties, not for an *hacendado,* but for another landlord, the Bank of Ejidal Credit. (The *ejido* is the tract of land given to "cooperatives" to work and usually includes arable and grazing land, with sufficient water for all purposes.) In other words, the peons have a new master—the Bank.

A bit of research into Mexican agrarian affairs would prove most interesting. The Cárdenas program was bitterly attacked as unconstitutional and communistic by Luis Cabrera, brilliant lawyer and one of the original 1910 revolutionaries, in an extensive article published recently in *El Hombre Libre.* It moved the President to say, in a national radio address, that he was not planning "to import foreign exotic doctrines into the country." But in the next breath, he urged the people of the Laguna region to "support the socialistic school in accordance with Article 4 of the Constitution in order to give the students a rational presentation of the social and economic panorama of Mexico." Did he notice any inconsistency in his two thoughts?

The President is still very far to the Left as the continual growth in power and prestige enjoyed by V. Lombardo Toledano shows. The secretary-general of the before-mentioned C. T. M., whose portrait was drawn for COMMONWEAL readers some time ago, has so far projected himself into national and international affairs that several critics have asked: "Is Toledano president? If not, his naked ambition to succeed Cárdenas, either as president or dictator in 1940, is dreadfully apparent!"

Look at the record. A few months ago, Toledano wrote an article in which he accused the Department of Education of having done nothing to further socialistic ideology in the school system. The department (knowing the accusation, for the most part, was true) came back with a feeble defense that fooled no one who has followed the pitiful "Socialism" forced into the system. Result: A few weeks later, Lombardo's "workers' congress," in solemn convention session, investigated public education, drew up a tentative program, and told the department what should be done. Now a message has just come forth from the inner sanctum of Señor Vásquez Vela, in which the Minister of Education announces numerous social experiments for 1937! Lombardo gets action!

His open enthusiasm for the Azaña government exceeds that of Cárdenas. He has proposed that all Spaniards in Mexico who sympathize with Franco be expelled from the country as "pernicious foreigners," as provided by the famous Article 33 of the Constitution. So much does he hate the Spanish Rightists that he has ordered cinema operators, who belong to the C. T. M., to refrain from grinding the crank on any news reels which depicts Spanish rebel success! Not only that, but he has banned the showing of any film which has as a subject Hitler, Mussolini, or anything relating to Fascism!

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Internationally, he issued a statement addressed to President Roosevelt, in which he told the American executive not to try to reinstate the Monroe Doctrine in inter-American affairs. The threat of Communism, he said, was "a specter raised by reactionary capitalists, who knew that conditions would for many years prevent the foundation of Communism in this hemisphere." What he really feared was what happened—that Communism might come in for bitter criticism at Buenos Aires, either directly or by implication, and that such criticism would hurt his position at home. So he defended it and denied it in one and the same breath!

Not content with such petty dictatorial movements, Toledano has waged war against the "Trotsky Communists" who invited Lenin's former comrade to come and reside in Mexico. Led by Diego Rivera, the Trotskyites have ridiculed Toledano's charges that their hero is a Fascist. Then, to put the finishing touches on the circuitous policy followed by this strange and powerful Toledano, a C. T. M. representative stood up in a labor convention at Vera Cruz and denied that the organization had any love for Communism or was affiliated with it in any way!

Yet, with all this Leftist leaning of both Cárdenas and Toledano, a new element of uncertainty has made its appearance on Mexico's political horizon. President Roosevelt's address to the Buenos Aires conference made a tremendous impression in Mexico. Over and over again, his stiring words concerning faith in God have been repeated and interpreted as meaning, almost certainly, a rebuke to Mexican intolerance. As no other nation in the hemisphere has attacked religion, Mexico must be the country at which the religious portion of the address was directed.

Too, Mr. Roosevelt's condemnation of governments which have overthrown democracy hit another Mexican target. All the soft words of praise to which Ambassador Daniels has given voice in exalting the policies of Cárdenas as paralleling those of Roosevelt (notably, on Thanksgiving Day and in a speech at the inauguration of a Cárdenas governor in Vera Cruz), have not helped to dissuade thinking Mexicans from the conviction that religious persecution and communistic tendencies are not only frowned on by President Roosevelt, but are openly condemned by him.

Yes, Cárdenas remains "far Left of center." But if he has a nickel's worth of political acumen hidden away among the bull-headed programs which so far have characterized his régime, he will take to heart the warnings sounded at Buenos Aires. Mexico, as the lone supporter of Communism and religious intolerance in this hemisphere is, sooner or later, bound to feel the disapproval and hostility of the combined American states.

THANK YOU FOR THE WOOD

ANONYMOUS

I AM ON relief. Yes, I know there also are others, at least I think there are or the case workers would not be so numerous.

I never meant to be on relief. I was a Chicago teacher, in a private, non-sectarian school from 1923 to 1933, and—here I am. Prior to coming to this school I was head resident in a Catholic settlement house in Chicago. I have enough defaulted bonds to paper my bath room, and $4,000 in a savings account in a Chicago bank. The bank closed in June, 1930.

The school failed in January, 1933, and I couldn't get work. Couldn't? A teacher, well qualified, experienced, couldn't get work? Exactly.

There was nothing in the professional line. At housework no one wanted me as I hadn't been working in anyone's kitchen—to amount to anything. At school I often cooked the meals. Our cook—Lord bless her—liked a "drop" and I liked her to the extent I hid her shortcoming, and said it was her day off. As the kitchen was directly behind the office, the meals were on schedule and the office did not suffer. Invariably the senior girls came from study hall and helped. They thought it was a lark. Vacations at our camp in Wisconsin, which was so lonely only the hoot owls and cardinals were our neighbors, my cooks walked out on me, and for weeks at a time I did the cooking. In March, 1933, I substituted the entire month as a priest's housekeeper while the regular worker was in the hospital. He was a Monsignor with five assistants and he said I could cook; he tried to place me and—here I am.

This is a small town. One always comes to a small town. It must be God wills it. I owned a cabin here, a very modern cabin of five rooms. There are three acres of land. Note: *Owned* a cabin. The taxes are unpaid since January, 1933. The place may be advertised and sold for unpaid taxes. The street has been paved since I bought the place, the assessments placed against the taxes, the total of taxes and assessments being $130 a year, and 10 percent added for delinquency.

The Relief Office do not offer to pay my taxes, although if I were on the road they would be forced to pay rent for me, as they do for others.

The Relief does not furnish gas, electricity or kindling wood. My house—the open, bungalow type—has a furnace, and it has not had a fire in it since April 15. I was cold in August, colder in September, and the first two weeks in October I froze. . . . Now I'm warmer, although the furnace isn't going. I'm enraged and that raises the temperature. After begging humbly for fuel, my case worker sent me a load of green chunks—rock elm—so green, or "wet" as we designate it, that the earth is still on it and the sap is oozing from it. It is a conglomerate load of wood—roots and limbs intermingled. Now I defy anyone to make that wood burn—or even sizzle. I've camped and scouted for years and I am a renowned fire builder, and—here I am, cold, and a load of chunks in my

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basement, waiting to be burned. If I had some kindling. . . . My case worker is a nice girl, admits she does not know how to make green chunks burn without kindling wood, but the Office orders the distribution of this wood which the relief clients have grubbed out.

When I read some hide-bound, purse-proud, overfed man's (or woman's) opinions on "paupers" I could scream. They claim we like to be on relief; try to beat the game; refuse to work; have been so nicely taken care of we will never take our place again in the ranks of workers; idleness is a habit with us. *Nicely taken care of!* Dear God, I don't know how we keep on. Abject, bitter, grinding, supremely degrading poverty is ours! We are on the dole, *and we do not get enough to eat!*

I have been on relief two years. Do I thank God for my poverty? Liken myself and my home to the Little House of Loretto and the Holy Family? Love poverty? Consider it a blessing? Don't make me laugh. I'm sound in wind and limb; college trained, a good executive—and a good cook. I'm willing to do any kind of work: scrubbing, cooking, ironing, clerking, teaching—oh, anything.

The Relief do not furnish thread, needles, shelf paper, tooth brushes, scrub brushes; nor do they furnish a dentist. If you are ill you may have—after miles of red tape and a delay that necessarily bates fever—the county doctor. But no medicine. What is the use of calling a doctor if he cannot prescribe?

My case worker advises me to start a nursery school. That venture calls for advertising and I haven't a cent—haven't had a penny since March, 1933. My case worker does all she can—gives me the wood she is ordered to dole out; tells me an educational program is opening up. She has been telling me that for two years. There is much talk for reemploying the white-collared man, projects have been started for him. The white-collared women are left to—*starve!*

It was the load of wet wood that started me on this historical document. Anyone is glad to get a load of wood—free. It's a shame to kick a gift horse in the teeth. I didn't mean to. Thanks for the wood.

While I Can See

His house now casts no shadow in the sun,
Where it walled out the sky the spiders spin,
The eaves are scattered and the birds are gone,
The hearth is cold and the bleak night creeps in.

His tenement is part of wind and rain,
A thing of dream, a pulsing of the blood,
A warmth on grass where the noon sun has lain,
A slashing where a skirted forest stood.

No more than running water I may find
His kindling shelter closed to every key,
But though the shining windows now are blind,
I will have eyes until the end to see
The treasured furnishings he left behind,
While I can see, his house will stand for me.

ALEX R. SCHMIDT.

Communications

THE BRITISH CRISIS

Moline, Ill.

TO the Editor: The letter of the Reverend Bernard Iddings Bell in the issue of January 22 recalls the following passages from his book, "Preface to Religion":

"Henry VIII was an avowed Catholic; but had two great desires which the Papacy opposed. First, he had a longing to rob the monasteries of England, which looked after practically all the social services of the realm, for the enrichment of himself and of a new-rich, business enterprise nobility which he had created. Secondly, he had a wife older than himself, ugly, dull, and incapable of bearing him a son and heir, whom he wished to put away. After waiting on the Pope, Clement VII, cajoling him, threatening him, trying to bribe him, all in vain, he took a bold step and forced a declaration (1534) that the Pope had no more power in England than any other foreign bishop—that the King was himself Supreme Head of the Church. Henry made one Cranmer, a devious gentleman (though a master of English prose), his Archbishop of Canterbury, put away his wife, and married, in turn, five other ladies, none of whom seems to have satisfied him, robbed the Church of its patrimony (1536-1545), and set about so reforming it as to make it his obedient servant" (page 146).

"Anglicanism will be seen to have been in its origin quite unromantic and in many respects unlovely; but it had its merits as a working system" (page 148).

Nothing here about an annulment, or about Spain having the Pope virtually under siege. Evidently the Canon has not been uninfluenced by the romance of Edward VIII. At that, he is far more honest than some of his confrères who decry "the myth that Henry VIII founded the Church of England."

C.

Esopus, N. Y.

TO the Editor: In the issue of THE COMMONWEAL for January 22, the Reverend Bernard Iddings Bell takes exception to your statement that Henry VIII forced the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of England to grant him a "divorce"; and the point of Dr. Bell's objection is that what the King really obtained was a declaration of nullity (from the beginning). Taking terms most exactly, Dr. Bell is quite correct, and it would be advisable for those who discuss this historical incident academically to employ the precise terminology. Nevertheless, the use of divorce for Henry's separation from Catherine of Aragon has become quite common, even in historical works of great authority. Thus, Dr. Gairdner has written an historical study entitled "New Lights on the Divorce of Henry VIII," and J. H. Robinson in his "History of Western Europe" has a chapter entitled "Henry VIII's Divorce Suit." I suppose that underlying the use of this term instead of declaration of nullity is the generally accepted fact that what Henry actually sought and obtained was a divorce—a separation from his lawful wife

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with permission to remarry. The fact that both Henry and those who granted his petition referred to the dispensation in other terms does not alter the objective historical facts.

There are two questions I should like Dr. Bell to answer: (1) In connection with his assertion that "the history of the Papacy in the Middle Ages is marked by similar annulments granted at royal desire for this, that or the other pretended reason," I ask Dr. Bell how many cases he can cite in which the Popes granted annulments (declarations of nullity) for reasons substantially no more valid than those adduced by Henry VIII? (2) What argument can be given to substantiate Dr. Bell's insinuation that the Pope in refusing Henry's plea was actuated by political motives rather than by the desire to uphold the sanctity of marriage and the principles of justice? Surely, when a man does what is objectively good we must presume he has a good motive until the contrary is proved.

Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.SS.R.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: The Reverend Bernard Iddings Bell of Rhode Island in his communication of January 22, 1937, asserts that "Henry VIII was never divorced from Catherine of Aragon."

Thomas Cranmer was enthroned as Archbishop of Canterbury by Henry VIII in 1533 and in the same year declared Henry's marriage to Catherine to be null and void. If Cranmer had authority to do this, there was a valid annulment—if not, there was neither a valid annulment nor a divorce. (The "annulment" was frequently called "divorce" at that time, since divorce in the modern sense was certainly unknown to an entirely Catholic England in the early sixteenth century.)

If the supremacy of the Papacy in *all* matters of faith and morals is conceded, Cranmer did not have the authority referred to since the Pope refused to grant the annulment—albeit with much delay. If the supremacy in *all* matters of faith and morals resides in regional synods, then it is very probable that Cranmer's authority was valid.

If the latter is true it is indeed a cause of concern to all of us who long for a reunited Christianity. There can never be a union of many into one, i.e., the establishment of a corporate moral person, without the acknowledgment of one head—one authority rather than independent regional heads supreme within their spheres. This proposition unquestionably doesn't appeal to sentiment but its logical basis is quite sound.

Canon Bell is greatly concerned about the accuracy of fact statements made by The Commonweal. When he states that Henry's "marriage to her [Catherine] was declared null and void for a cause allowable in the Roman Catholic Church" he is in error. There was no sufficient ground upon which Pope Clement could base a dissolution of the marriage and maintain the moral supremacy of the Papacy. Catherine denied the consummation of her marriage with Arthur [Henry's brother]. Henry never contradicted her in this. It would be interesting to know, therefore, what the ground upon which these "similar annulments" to which Bishop Bell refers, were based.

The learned Canon pleads at one moment, in a sentimental vein, for the destruction of prejudice and its causes, primarily falsity and intolerance. But when it suits his purpose he wields his brush of mud most dexterously, and falsely impugns (expressly and implicitly) the integrity, sincerity and honesty of the Papal See throughout an extended period of its existence. It would seem a certainty that such expressions coming from a man of the eminence of Canon Bell are conducive to "a prejudice that must seem unfortunate to all of us who long for" a reunited Christendom.

John A. Anderson.

THE SPANISH WAR

Kalamazoo, Mich.

TO the Editor: I am in hearty accord with your editorial comment in the issue of January 15 to the effect that "the decision which brought Moorish troops [under Franco] to fight down radicalism [in Spain] may prove to be the most ill-advised patriotic maneuver in all history."

Catholics throughout the world and especially Catholic publications in this country (with a few distinguished ceptions such as the *Catholic Worker* and The Commonweal) seem to have lost some of their usual balance in commenting upon developments in Spain. In fact at times a condition of hysteria and frenzy seem to be developing. I think it has been an error in tactics for the Catholic press to idealize as a crusader for Christianity, General Franco and his armies composed of Germans, Moors, Italians, Portuguese and Spaniards, just as the attempt of Leftist propagandists to paint the Russo-Spanish loyalists as defenders of democracy against a Fascist-clerical coup d'état has been manifestly absurd to all detached observers.

Now that the Spanish Civil War has degenerated into a dangerous international brawl involving Germans, Italians and Spanish rebels on the Right, and Spaniards, Russians and others on the Left, with earthly motives and methods predominating on both sides, now that this unhappy and dangerous situation has come about, Catholics should reexamine a position assumed hastily and with the best of intentions. Let it not be said of Catholics at some future date that they were partially responsible for having complicated or even defeated the efforts of the United States to remain aloof and utterly neutral with reference to any European struggle that might develop in the next few years.

One policy helping a lot would be for the Catholic press, and those in responsible positions elsewhere in the Church, to adopt a more critical attitude toward "news" coming from Spain, or coming to their attention from less direct sources. Much good would be done if we were less willing to believe and pass on as gospel truth anything that paints the Leftists as savages while dismissing as Leftist propaganda anything reflecting on the rebels. Such a view, quite prevalent, is as naive as the propaganda coming from Leftist forces abroad and at home, glorifying the Spanish loyalists and defiling the rebels.

James J. Burns.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—A message of congratulation from Pope Pius XI to President Roosevelt included the following: "The Holy Father prays God, Whose sovereignty the President has so fittingly and publicly proclaimed as embracing individuals and nations, that He may grant success to his efforts in procuring for the beloved American people enduring prosperity and lasting peace." * * * In a special *Catholic Press Month* statement, Bishop John Mark Gannon of Erie, Pa., episcopal chairman of the Press Department of the N.C.W.C., said, "If there ever was a duty specifically marked out in any age, it is the duty of the Catholic editor today, for it is his glory to expound and defend the truth. The source of all evil of our day is the corruption of the truth. . . . The Catholic editor, the Catholic author, the Catholic preacher, the Catholic publisher can shed more light on this disordered world, can pour in more of the unction of Christ to heal the wounds of . . . bruised and angry groups of rebellious men than any other class of leaders. * * * Sister Mary Augustine, who recently celebrated her seventieth anniversary as an Oblate Sister of Providence, and Sister Mary Evangelista who celebrated her fiftieth anniversary, received a special blessing from the Holy Father. In honoring these Negro nun-jubilarians Archbishop Michael J. Curley of Baltimore pontificated at a solemn high Mass with Most Reverend Louis Pastorelli, Superior General of the Josephite Fathers as arch-priest. * * * Speaking in Philadelphia during the Church Unity Octave, Reverend John La Farge, S.J., associate editor of *America,* estimated that there were 145,000,000 Christians of the various Eastern Rites separated from Rome, 100,000,000 of them under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Moscow. Eastern Rite Christians united with Rome number 7,758,300. * * * The Rural Life Bureau of the N.C.W.C. has just published "Rural Catholic Action," a 64-page pamphlet, the first of a projected Diocesan Directors' Series. * * * Kusonoki Toyokichi and Murakoshi Kinzo, Japanese Catholic laymen, have been awarded the papal decoration, "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice," for active work among the lepers and in secondary education, respectively. * * * Bishop Schrembs of Cleveland presided at the recent public meeting of the Cleveland Emergency Peace Campaign and Reverend R. A. McGowan of the N.C.W.C. represented the Catholic Association for International Peace.

The Nation.—While the "super-flood" ravaged the Ohio and Mississippi valleys, unprecedented cold weather brought what experts termed "the most prolonged peril to crops in the history of California." The situation was called "exceedingly desperate." Before the last of the cold snap, the fruit loss was $60,000,000, and the orchard workers were having trouble getting fuel oil delivered for the outdoor stoves. * * * The deficiency bill providing $899,227,318 for relief expenses up to June passed smoothly through the House. WPA Administrator Hopkins told a House committee that the administration expected a cut in the WPA rolls of 600,000 before June, possible because of the predicted gain in private business and agricultural employment and income. * * * The East Coast sea strikers voted to go back to work pending arbitration of their case under the auspices of federal agencies. The rank and file organization was recognized as a proper party for arbitration. * * * The La Follette Senate subcommittee which last year showed the enormous armaments which corporations bought to handle labor situations, during the week publicized the activities of industrial labor spies. The National Metal Trades Association has kept a "war chest" of $214,928 for labor protection, and its representatives testified that the Army, Navy and Justice departments "sought our cooperation in order to keep them in production through certain services of the association." Eminent spy company is the Corporations Auxiliary Company, with 500 clients. It pays its president $75,000 a year, and its general manager, $62,300. Typical corporations using the spy system were Chrysler, General Motors, U. S. Steel, Postal Telegraph and the Texas Corporation. * * * The Twentieth Century Fund reported that in 1933, 69 corporations with net profits of over $5,000,000 received nearly one-third of the total income of all corporations in the country. There were 375 corporations, excluding financial firms, that owned 56.2 percent of the country's total corporate wealth. Contrastingly, 211,586 corporations, or 54.5 percent of the total number, with assets of less than $50,000 each, owned only 1.4 percent of total corporate assets. * * * Mr. Walter Runciman, English Cabinet minister, informally visited the White House over the week-end of January 23. He reported vague agreement had been reached that the general objectives of the two governments are the same and that both countries, if they can, want to bring about a greater degree of Anglo-American commerce.

The Wide World.—Speaking at Lyons, Premier Léon Blum outlined the terms under which France would be willing to make an agreement with Germany. Europeans, he declared, had been living under a "system of recurrent shocks" occasioned by rearmament rivalry and considerable loose talk. If Germany would take effective steps to curb both and join a plan to effect collective security, France would surely be willing to extend credit and other aid sufficient to ward off economic collapse. M. Blum suggested very pointedly that the League of Nations was the core of any thinkable peace policy on the Continent. The address was very adroitly and diplomatically phrased. It was expected that Hitler would reply on January 30, when nation-wide attention to his remarks is being counted upon by propaganda authorities. * * * In Spain, the Insurgent attack on Malaga had apparently bogged down as reinforcements were sent to aid the Leftists. Air bombardments of Madrid continued, leaving the city more of

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a shambles than ever. A noteworthy article sent from Paris by James M. Minifie, New York *Herald-Tribune* correspondent in Madrid until recently, declared that "Spain is passing through a welter of bloodshed without parallel in western Europe since the French Revolution." The outcome he considered unpredictable. Italy and Germany agreed to halt sending volunteers, provided other countries did likewise. An article in General Erich Ludendorff's paper was suppressed by the Nazis for contending that the German "volunteers" were pressed into service. * * * Russia continued its efforts to suppress old-line Leninists. The sensational trial of Karl Radek, former editor of *Izvestia,* and others, brought out testimony to the effect that the defendants, acting in collaboration with Trotsky, had planned to secure German and Japanese assistance by offering to these nations portions of Russian territory. As the number of those indicted grew larger, it became fairly evident, however, that such "confessions" were probably not in harmony with the real facts. Stalin was gunning for all those who had constituted the Trotsky faction in the days following Lenin's death. More than a trace of anti-Semitism was likewise evident in the proceedings. It looked as if Stalin were bent on establishing a kind of Pan-Slavic "Fascism" to replace the system hitherto in vogue. * * * Following acrimonious debates in the Japanese diet, the Emperor suspended the said diet for two days. On January 23, the Cabinet of Premier Koki Hirota resigned, and the army command announced that it would not cooperate with any government containing representatives of parties which had criticized military expenditures. Thereupon the Emperor commanded General Kazushigo Ugaki to form a new Cabinet. At the moment, military opposition to this proposal had not yet been overcome and rumors of a dictatorship continued. * * * A new series of attacks on Jewish groups in Poland led up to an extreme Rightist critique of the government for its "philo-Semitic" attitude. The principal point made by Colonel Slawek and his friends was that Jewish students must be "isolated" at the universities.

* * * *

Peace Plans.—Admiral Richard Byrd has a suggestion to offer. In a correspondence with Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University, president of the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace, made public January 21, he says that the nations of Europe and Asia should agree not to fight for the next six months and the English-speaking nations of the world should offer their services of mediation and concilation to settle the problems that make war so imminent. Dr. Butler welcomed the suggestion and declared his willingness to sponsor a joint proposal to the President and the Secretary of State that we invite the English-speaking nations of the world to make this proposal to all signatories of the Kellogg Pact of 1927, renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. On January 24, the National Peace Conference made public a report prepared by thirty-four economists indicating how the peace of the world may be preserved. The report took the form of broad general suggestions on which these experts could all agree such as the broadening rather than the restricting of international trade; extension of the Hull policy of reciprocal trade agreements; international exchanges of pertinent commercial information; an increase of foreign investments and modification of the Johnson Act, which forbids loans to nations in default to the United States government; a compromise of the war debt question on the basis of our import policy; arbitration of trade and debt disputes generally; stabilization of currencies. The have-nots are to be placated by removing trade restrictions rather than by transfer of territory, though this latter might help in an emergency. Chairman Key Pittman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee introduced a neutrality resolution, January 22. It extends the neutrality resolution of August, 1935, which was amended February, 1936, for an indefinite period, and makes certain changes. In the case of war or civil war the President will be required to embargo all shipments of arms, munitions and implements of war to the forces involved and all additional materials whose shipment in the President's opinion might endanger the "security," "peace or neutrality of the United States." No American citizen may sail on the vessel of a belligerent power and no American vessel trading with the belligerents may be armed except for the small fire-arms needed to maintain discipline aboard.

Housing.—Mrs. Roosevelt welcomed the delegates to the fourth annual meeting of the National Public Housing Conference in Washington. A letter from the President was read, saying: "You will not be alone in your efforts. Through the Public Works Administration the federal government has carried the fight directly to the slum. . . . Ten years ago public erection of fifty-one big, carefully planned community projects, replacing festering slum areas, would have seemed incredible. . . . If, indeed, the deeper purpose of democratic government is to assist as many of its citizens as possible, especially those who need it most, then we have a great opportunity lying ahead in the specific field of housing." A telegram from Senator Wagner said: "Next week I plan to introduce in the Senate a low-rent housing bill embodying in full the principles for which we have fought together during the past two years. I look upon President Roosevelt's inaugural statement that one-third of our people are ill-housed as a summation of nation-wide sentiment. I further regard the President's stirring remarks as the harbinger of determined and comprehensive action at this session of Congress toward eradicating slums and putting America in the vanguard of the better-housed nations." The National Public Housing Conference is sponsoring a ten-year plan to "abolish slums and rehouse the lower income groups at rents they can afford." At a discussion on costs, speakers tended to play down land and construction costs and to emphasize necessary operating costs. They were optimistic about decreases in interest costs; but with all these at a minimum, "we still find that good housing for low-income workers cannot pay out at proper rents. The only way to bridge the gap is by subsidy." A resolution was passed urging Congress "promptly to establish a permanent fed-

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eral agency whose duty shall be to formulate and assist in the development of a long-range slum clearance low-rent housing program, with adequate funds to make loans to local agencies."

The Flood.—As we go to press, the crest of the Ohio River flood has passed through Pittsburgh, Pa., Wheeling, W. Va., Portsmouth and Cincinnati, Ohio, and Louisville, Ky., and is moving down toward Evansville, Ind., and Cairo, Ill., the junction of the Ohio, Mississippi, Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. Thousands are feverishly at work at Memphis, Tenn., and other Mississippi River towns strengthening levees, and in towns like New Madrid, Mo., and Tiptonville, Ark., the inhabitants have been warned to flee for their lives. General Edward Markham, chief of the army engineers, was reported as hopeful that a great flood would not be experienced all down the Mississippi provided the Arkansas and Red Rivers did not attain serious flood proportions. The new channels built to shorten the Mississippi River bed by 1,100 miles after the 1927 disaster were to have their first severe test. The area of greatest danger was held to be from Cairo 250 miles to below Memphis, where the crest was not expected before February 5. To date 900,000 refugees from 11 states are reported, with 2,000,000 acres along the Mississippi in Tennessee, Arkansas, Missouri and Mississippi under water; 150 Ohio River towns and villages are in need of either light, food or water—at times all three. Admiral Cary T. Grayson of the American Red Cross has stepped-up his national appeal from $2,000,000 to $10,000,000. The President and Congress are making preparations for huge relief expenditures as well. Hardest hit to date is Louisville, Ky., where 230,000 of 325,000 citizens have been moved to higher ground. As with many of the river towns, the power plant is too near the river and consequently the city is without electricity; there is dire shortage of fuel, food and drinking water, and disease is rampant. Already 200 are reported dead. To meet the emergency the mayor has been given dictatorial powers, with 600 federal troops and scores of policemen and firemen from other cities under his command. Water, food and medical supplies are being rushed by rail and plane from Northern cities.

Karl Muth.—The January issue of *Hochland,* the Munich review, is treasurable primarily because it honors the seventieth birthday of its founder and editor, Professor Karl Muth. A number of Germany's most prominent intellectuals, both clerical and lay, write their impressions of a man they consider guide, philosopher and friend. When about thirty years ago Karl Muth founded *Hochland,* Germany was without a high-class literary periodical. There were a number of popular monthlies, and a very respectable daily press. But in general the spirit of the *Kulturkampf* was still abroad: Catholics abandoned cultural interests and, above all, creative art to the world around them and continued to concern themselves solely with apologetics and political defense. This feeling was doubtless eminently natural, but it meant that a sense of intellectual inferiority was bound to prevail, especially among young people, if there were no change. The thrill of pleasure which came to young priests and academicians when they read the first numbers of the new magazine is recorded by some of the contributors to this January issue. Muth, however, was no stand-patter, satisfied with a measure of success and a great deal of diplomacy. He hammered away at cultural obscurantism. He published novels, first of all Handel-Mazzetti's "Jesse und Maria," which possessed value as works of art. This zeal and objectivity, fed always by a profound devotion to the Catholic faith, made not a few enemies, so that the early years of *Hochland* were exciting enough. Yet the periodical gradually made its way, and still remains what it was at the beginning—a great review, which combines expository, critical and creative writing of excellence much better than does any other Catholic magazine in any language. Without being amateurish, it has steadily been one step ahead of the procession. It is a great pity that the number of readers in the United States is not larger. Regarding Professor Muth's personality, it has been rightly said that a half-hour of conversation with him abides as an unforgettable experience. Seldom has an editor so thoroughly identified himself with his contributors and literary friends. One thinks inevitably of Brunetière, though Muth is a greater man than Brunetière.

Non-Catholic Religious Activities.—The United Synagogue of America launched, January 21, a campaign to end religious indifference in America. Five hundred persons gathered at the Hotel New Yorker in New York to organize a National Committee which will first of all make a scientific survey of the causes of this evil, particularly as it affects Jewish life. Among the measures suggested were cooperation of the rabbinate and the leaders of the laity, adult education and arousing a widespread appreciation of "the value and need of religion in our day." * * * Since 1932 more than 1,000,000 pupils have been added to the world's Sunday schools throughout the world. Most of this increase can be attributed to missionary work in Africa. In North America, "the Sunday School Stronghold of the World," the number of pupils is about the same today as it was in 1932. The city showing the greatest gain in pupils is Athens, Greece, but attendance in Europe as a whole has fallen off. * * * February 14 is Race Relations Sunday, which will be observed by Protestant churches in all parts of the country. There will be exchanges of preachers and choirs between white and colored churches, interracial mass meetings and contacts between young people's groups. To better the condition of the Negro the Federal Council of Churches is laying special emphasis on the amelioration of share-cropping conditions in the cotton belt, building up consumers cooperatives in which both races would participate and working for social legislation and impartial, non-discriminatory administration of the nation's laws. * * * Children whose parents have given written consent will now be excused from school half an hour early one day a week in Troy, New York, to attend religious instruction. The Troy Ministerial Association has arranged for the holding of classes in thirteen churches, while Catholic and

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Jewish children in the public schools will continue the religious instruction they have been receiving for some time.

Newer Religious Literature. — No complete reading guide to newer religious publications can be offered. There follow the titles of some new books. "Al Baghdadi," by Edward F. Madaras, S.J. (New York: Jesuit Mission Press. $2.50), reprints a file of a "journal purlished at odd intervals" at Baghdad, Iraq, by Father Madaras and his associates at the American Jesuit college of that city. It is fine, chatty mission copy, adorned with drawings which are sometimes impositions on the public but often also as deft and witty as they can be. "The Catholic Philosophy of History," edited by Monsignor Peter Guilday, contains a number of essays toward the idea of a Catholic theory of the meaning of history (New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons. $3.00). "Penal Legislation in the New Code of Canon Law" is a new edition of Father H. A. Ayrinhac's well-known commentary on the fifth book of the Code (New York: Benziger Brothers. $3.75). "And Pilate Wrote a Title" is a vivid retelling of the Passion. The author, Franz Johannes Weinrich, introduces the various participants in that awful tragedy and lets them describe the event. The translation, by the Reverend Joseph W. Grundner, is smooth and correct (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company. $2.50). "Discourse on Grace and the Sacraments," by the Reverend Clement Crock, is a volume of well-planned sermons on the theme indicated. But to some of the language exception might well be taken (New York: Joseph F. Wagner). "A Study of Catholic Secondary Education during the Colonial Period," by the Reverend Edmund J. Goebel, brings together much interesting and virtually forgotten information (New York: Benziger Brothers. $2.50). "The Meaning of the Mass," by the Reverend John Kearney, C.S.S., is a fluently written, popular introduction (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne. 5 shillings). "Songs in the Night," by a Poor Clare Colettine, is a book of mystical meditations, similar in character to the great volumes of the Carmel tradition, but refreshingly simple, even homely (Sheed and Ward. $2.50).

Religious Music and the Radio.—The charms of religious choral singing are by no means unfamiliar to radio listeners. In so far as Catholic choirs are concerned, Father Finn and his singers have gained merited renown. Their renditions are careful of nuances, harmonious, exquisitely reticent. The choir is the life-work of a great master far more anxious—as all really good masters are—to safeguard the well-being of their singers than to demonstrate their own virtuosity. Other good music is coming to the fore. Momentarily we note that Dr. A. T. Davison's Harvard Memorial Choir had been engaged for two broadcasts with the Catholic Truth Hour. The dates—January 24 and January 31—will unfortunately belong to the past ere this issue of THE COMMONWEAL can reach most subscribers. This choir is distinguished for excellent taste as well as knowledge of the art. The Program for January 31 follows: "Inimici autem," by Orlando di Lasso, whose memory lies over Munich like a radiant dream; "Ave verum," by the great and Catholic William Byrd; "O sacrum convivium," by Viadana, concerning whom we know nothing; "Crucifixus," by Lotti, whose counterpoint delighted the court of Dresden; and "Cantate Domino," by old Hassler, whose organ music once delighted the Fuggers. All this is melody out of the treasure-trove of the Christian renaissance, so often misunderstood and ignorantly vilified.

* * * *

General Motors.—When General Motors officials held conversations with the Flint Alliance of non-union employees and their local supporters, Mr. Homer Martin, head of the United Automobile Workers, labeled it a "stupendous and dastardly double-cross and a break of good faith." The workers refused to evacuate the factories as they had agreed to do on the understanding that the company would bargain on a national scale with the union. Mr. Sloan interpreted this refusal and his conversations thus: "Mr. Lewis has taken the position that the plants would not be evacuated until we agreed to recognize the United Automobile Workers of America as the exclusive bargaining agency for all General Motors workers. In the face of this positive assertion and in view of the principle for which we stand. . . ." John L. Lewis made a public statement: "We have advised the administration . . . that for six months the economic royalists represented by General Motors contributed their money and used their energy to drive the administration out of power. The administration asked labor for help to repel this attack and labor gave its help. The same economic royalists now have their fangs in labor. The workers of this country expect the administration to help the workers in every legal way." This created a genuine sensation, and the President answered: "In the interests of peace there come moments when statements, conversations and headlines are not in order." Then Secretary Perkins tried to arrange a meeting of the principals on both sides. Mr. Sloan answered her letter: "We sincerely regret to have to say that we must decline to negotiate further with the union while its representatives continue to hold our plants unlawfully. We cannot see our way clear, therefore, to accept your invitation." The President and Secretary Perkins then held long conversations with labor leaders, and coming out, President Roosevelt said: "I told them that I was not only disappointed in the refusal of Mr. Sloan to come down here, but that I regarded it as a very unfortunate decision on his part." Secretary Perkins did not hide her annoyance: "An episode like this must make it clear to the American people why the workers have lost confidence in General Motors. . . . The American people do not expect them to sulk in their tents because they feel the sit-down strike is illegal. There was a time when picketing was considered illegal. The legality of the sit-down strike has yet to be determined." Mr. Lewis said, "The strike situation is very satisfactory from our standpoint." Homer Martin said, "Only a real change in the policies of General Motors will bring peace, either temporary or permanent." The Flint Alliance and the company were jockeying to get some production going again.

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The Play and Screen

But for the Grace of God

THIS is another play of the proletariat, and despite some of the reviewers, by no means the worst one New York has seen. It has some moving bits of characterization and some poignant moments. I have a shrewd suspicion that had this been the first or even the second of the proletarian propaganda plays it might have received an uncommonly warm welcome in a section of the press. The trouble is that it comes rather late in the day. The public, that is, the public that is willing to pay Broadway prices, never cared for this type of play, and those reviewers who are always demanding plays that are "socially significant" are perhaps realizing that plays with messages are not usually the most enjoyable. It is all very well for these reviewers to belittle the literature of escape, to brand it as cowardly and untrue; the fact of the matter is, it is rarely as untrue as the propaganda play and it is usually far more interesting. Perhaps Leopold Atlas, the author of "But for the Grace of God," would deny that his work really falls into the propaganda class because he does not specify any particular solution to the problem of mass oppression, but the fact that it lays crime directly at the door of the employer certainly sets it in the category of plays written to foster class hatred. Because a young man's father is out of work and his brother is ill and needs money to be properly taken care of, the young man turns into a gunman, and murders his employer in a peculiarly atrocious and unprovoked fashion. To make this young man one week an innately good young fellow, and the next week a murderer of an utterly callous type, is not good psychology, and to have him unrepentant and appeal to his father to do likewise, is not good morals.

It is the twisted moral sense of most of these propaganda plays which make them primarily so unpleasant. Their authors hate the injustice of the employer, his brutality, his avarice, and justly hate it, but they give the impression that such employers are the rule. Moreover, they not only excuse the crimes of the employed, or non-employed, but often make out that these crimes are inevitable. Utterly materialistic in their ideals, these playwrights have no slightest idea that man lives not by bread alone. As Mary Colum remarked in a recent article, they are interested not in justice or humanity but in quick returns, and when these returns do not come quick enough they fall to denouncing society. I do not say that Mr. Atlas is one of these, but this is the impression left by his play. The Guild has given it an excellent production, and special mention should be made of the acting of Joe Brown, jr., Theodore McKnight, James Bell, Robert J. Mulligan, Kathryn Grill and Joseph Greenwald. Stewart Chaney's settings are realistically effective. But when all is said and done, such plays as "But for the Grace of God" make the return of plays of poetry and imagination, even of romance, a consummation devoutly to be wished. Nobility still exists in life and in humanity, and the playwright who acknowledges it is the playwright whom the ages will accept. (At the Guild Theatre.)

The Show Is On

"THE SHOW IS ON," after all, is the show which Beatrice Lillie is in, and this despite the fine settings and costumes of Vincente Minnelli, the humor of Reginald Gardiner, the gyrations of Bert Lahr, the dancing of Paul Haakon and Mitzi Mayfair, the good looks and, oddly enough in a review, the excellent singing of the chorus. But Miss Lillie is a show in herself. Where is her like? Though at times her humor is not of the most delicate sort, her personality robs it of offense. Call her a clown if you like, she is none the less the artist always, and she gives her best in "The Show Is On." Mr. Gardiner has no skit as funny as his locomotive of last season, but he is always amusing and often distinguished in his work, a worthy companion to Miss Lillie. Bert Lahr is always preposterously funny, and never more so than he is this year. Mr. Haakon and Miss Mayfair are two of the most skilful dancers now before the public. In short, "The Show Is On," despite two or three sketches which might have been omitted in the cause of good taste, is above the average of Winter Garden reviews. (At the Winter Garden.)

GRENVILLE VERNON.

Champagne Waltz

A TARDY deviation is at hand in the formula that has been so strictly adhered to in conducting music for motion pictures. The distinction which heretofore has been strongly marked between so-called "jazz" music and operetta in films is now obliterated. Both are now equal factors in the theme, and the resultant light, airy, even whimsical blending proves highly pleasing to the ear and genuinely amusing to the eye. A simple but coherent plot, capable direction of a capable cast, the factual nature of material background, and a congenial commingling of music, comedy and light romance carry the experiment to success. In addition, Veloz and Yolanda have two striking dance numbers, and Jack Oakie deals competently with competent dialogue.

The idea places a touring "hotcha" American jazz band, under the leadership of Fred MacMurray, in next-door competition to an old Waltz Palace in Vienna. There, direct descendants of Johann Strauss lose the rivalry to the American "jazz-hounds," only to turn around and themselves invade Broadway, entering the music of Strauss in competition to American tunes. The competition between the old and new leads to various romantic complications, which are finally cleared in a happy ending.

The gracious strains of Johann Strauss and the beautiful voice of Gladys Swarthout are the musical highlights, but the brilliant finale is the not unexpected union of Viennese waltz and Broadway jazz in a dance palace that far outstrips in size and elaborateness anything ever seen in New York. Thus they link the modest folk songs of an old Austrian beer garden to Broadway's interpretation of "The Blue Danube," as played for the finale by musicians in amusing numbers, in the form of a symphony orchestra, in a jazz orchestra, and finally by both.

JAMES P. CUNNINGHAM.

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Books

Glamor and Ireland

Parnell, a Biography; by Joan Haslip. New York: Frederick A. Stokes. $3.00.

AMONG all the men who have dominated the history of Ireland's struggle for independence in the last century and a half Charles Stewart Parnell will always stand out for his enigmatic qualities, as well as for the story of his tragedy. Miss Haslip has done her best to make us see the man and understand the thing that made him the uncrowned King of Ireland fifty years ago—his power over men, his unrelenting, unhurrying and unceasing drive to an objective clearly envisaged and never out of mind, the volcano under the snow and, at the last, the man, human and weak as the rest of us, wrecked (like the human race) by a woman. All the facts are there duly set down from the beginning, with no attempt to gild, gloss or diminish. A reviewer has complained that her style is "as gray and colorless as London weather in winter." It isn't; but even if it were, the story is one that needs no purple patches, nor can it stand such. It almost tells itself, and Miss Haslip has done wisely to let it do so, as it does in limpid simplicity and scrupulous fairness.

But does it fully unveil for us the personality that was Parnell? Can any biography do that for any man? Can a man even do it for himself, however honestly he may try? Some have come near it, Augustine, Rousseau, perhaps. But Miss Haslip at least puts us on the track of that fierce driving *daimonisch* streak in him that stiffened his will to adamant and crushed all opposition until almost the last. There was in the Parnell blood a fire of the sort that makes madmen, geniuses and leaders of men—especially leaders of lost causes, which is why so many hopeless causes have not been lost and so many impossibilities have been accomplished. It is a dangerous possession to him who has it and invariably exacts its price. Parnell paid the price, and that is what makes his tragedy almost Grecian in its proportions.

It was the cruelest possible choice that Kitty O'Shea forced upon the Irish people in the last fatal years of Parnell's life—that between the two most imperative loyalties which can call to the Irish soul. Nor was it an altogether clear choice, a plain either-or that none could mistake. Men and women who would cheerfully have died for their religion stood with Parnell, and others who would as gladly have died for the cause of Irish freedom stood against him; both, in the main, must have been true to conscience, for all that there were cases of sordid motives and inexcusable brutalities of speech and behavior. The conflict could not but leave behind it a legacy of terrible bitterness, and it is still traceable fifty years afterward.

One is tempted to speculate as to the course of Irish history had the Gladstone Home Rule bill become a law. Would there be an Irish Free State today? Would there be a United Ireland? It is anyone's guess. History's moving finger has settled the matter, and Miss Haslip has written an authentic piece of that history.

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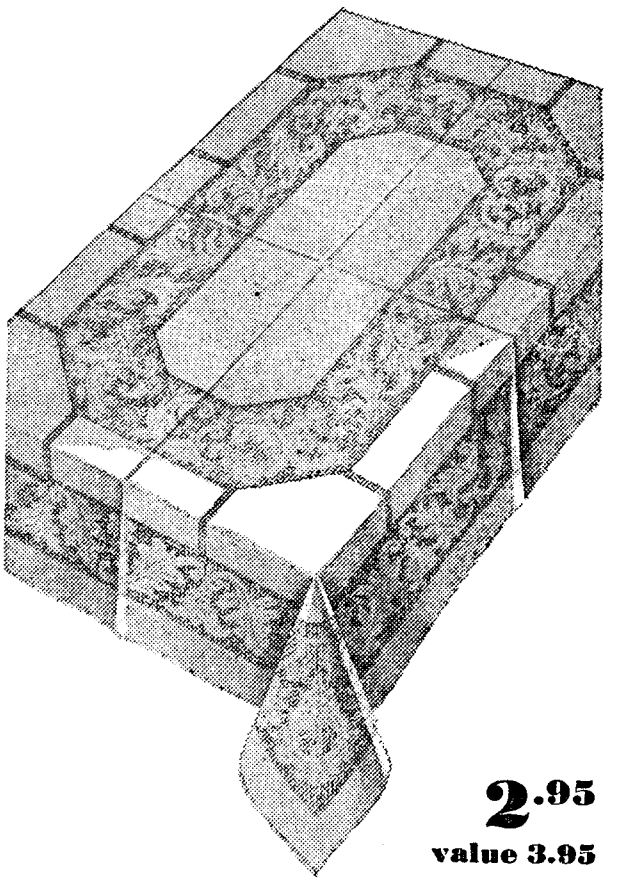

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Next Week

THE FASCIST-COMMUNIST DILEMMA is the first of two articles contributed by Father Wilfrid Parson, famous Jesuit writer and former editor of *America*. Father Parsons believes "the Popular Front idea, sent on its way from Moscow at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in August, 1935, contains the seeds of very serious trouble for Catholics, especially here in the United States, unless we realize its nature in time, and take some concerted measures to meet it." A provocative essay into a central problem. . . . In REFLECTIONS OF FRANCIS THOMPSON, George N. Shuster examines with new vigor and light another of the Catholic poets of the last century. As in his recent analysis of Patmore's work, Mr. Shuster puts his finger on the "dominants" of the poetry of Francis Thompson, and evaluates it critically, appreciatively and convincingly. . . . MERCY RIDES THE CLOUDS, by Julius W. Haun, tells the story of the rise of a hospital which, after a disastrous tornado in 1883, was "improvised in Library Hall," Rochester, Minnesota, by the Sisters of St. Francis and a pair of country doctors, to the present world-famous Mayo clinic. It is a fascinating and really stirring tale of one of the nation's triumphs in applied medical science and Christianity. . . . LOOKING SOUTH, by Richard Pattee, urges the importance and promise of Catholic intellectual cooperation between this country and Hispanic America. Mr. Pattee, a teacher in the University of Puerto Rico, recently had a leave of absence to take a trip through Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Cuba and Panama, and his impressions are very vivid, by no means passing, and, we believe, most interesting.

"Inevitability"

From These Beginnings, by Jane Levington Comfort. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

THIS novel falls easily into two distinct patterns: it is at once a pleasant satire on a not uncommon phase of American life, and at the same time the story of an adolescent girl from the days of her emotional awakening at the age of twelve to the time of her marriage at seventeen. As a satire it holds the mirror up to the parent who gives all his thought and energy to chimerical theories of education while he neglects or ignores the vital problems of his own children, growing up about him. In this field the author offers her best gifts. She has broad vision, she knows human nature and she has humor—ironic humor.

Not so satisfying as the satire is the story itself. Its principal characters are Paula Crosby, the child-woman whose love affairs are the core of the novel, her eccentric father, Wilton, her mother, Judith, and her lover, Brandt. Judith Crosby is depicted as the one who steadies the beam of her family balance, though she also reaches slippery spaces with the rest. Generally she is well drawn, as indeed are most of the characters; the situations, however, are at times a bit far-fetched.

From Detroit and a near-by lake colony the scene of the action changes to California. It is in Los Angeles that the melodramatic ending of the story takes place, a marriage before a Justice of the Peace climaxing or perhaps anti-climaxing the love story. In this California setting permeated with cults and isms, the doings of Wilton Crosby and his friends offer rare material for the author's satiric brush.

The novel is remarkably unreticent, and without any excuse for being so. Added to this is the fact that these people have no sense of sin. Even the mother, Judith, in talking to her daughter of her own brief slipping, implores the child to "try to see that it is all right, that it had to happen." And the young lovers evidently think more of the "had-to-happen" than of the sixth commandment.

CHARLOTTE M. MEAGHER.

It's a Mad World

Solstice and Other Poems, by Robinson Jeffers. New York: Random House. $2.50.

THE WORLD Robinson Jeffers pictures in his latest volume does not differ radically from the one he has portrayed since "Tamar"; it is a world not open to the intellect, to be felt only in the blood, and then to be felt most deeply when the blood is spilled. If this seems a dreadful world, Mr. Jeffers assures us that it is at least made bearable by the ability of the poetic imagination to distil beauty from it; there is "the lost battle's beauty." His is an estheticism that demands strong meat. "At the Birth of an Age" opens the book; it is a long poem (or play, for it is both dramatic and narrative in form) set in the time of the barbarian invasions, in which the poet sees a parallel to our own age. This parallel he carries to the point of making his heroine one of those forceful but neurotic women who people his other poems; Gudrun

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comes to the conclusion implicit and explicit elsewhere in her creator's work, that life is cruel but beauty saves the day. Of his cruel, but suffering god, Mr. Jeffers says "his beauty redeems his acts." Mr. Jeffers has always been deeper in his feeling than in thought, and one can only wish that he had reflected that an act's beauty is intrinsic to it and that, lacking goodness, it lacks abiding beauty. But there is perhaps no logic in this for one who reasons from Mr. Jeffers's assumptions.

"At the Birth of an Age" suffers from both its anachronistic sentiments and the rather general form in which they are presented. The title-poem (which concerns a mother who murders her two children) has not these defects, but its violence is also exaggerated to the point of bathos, and beyond. Taken as a usable philosophy, its ideas are horrible; considered merely from within the precincts of taste, they are ridiculous. Some shorter poems produce the same effect, but in them the very limitations of space force the trowel to be used with a lighter hand, so that the apprehension of a nostalgic beauty seems sufficient reason for their being. One closes the book (not to open it again, I think) feeling that Mr. Jeffers is a sort of Whitman *bouleversé*—more masculine and in his political notions more sound—who is remarkable in having the vigor to celebrate a vision which would reduce other poets to silence or to Communism. Beyond this one might add that he should not be given to sensitive adolescents in their gloomy period, though that might be to deprive him of his most sympathetic audience.

GEOFFREY STONE.

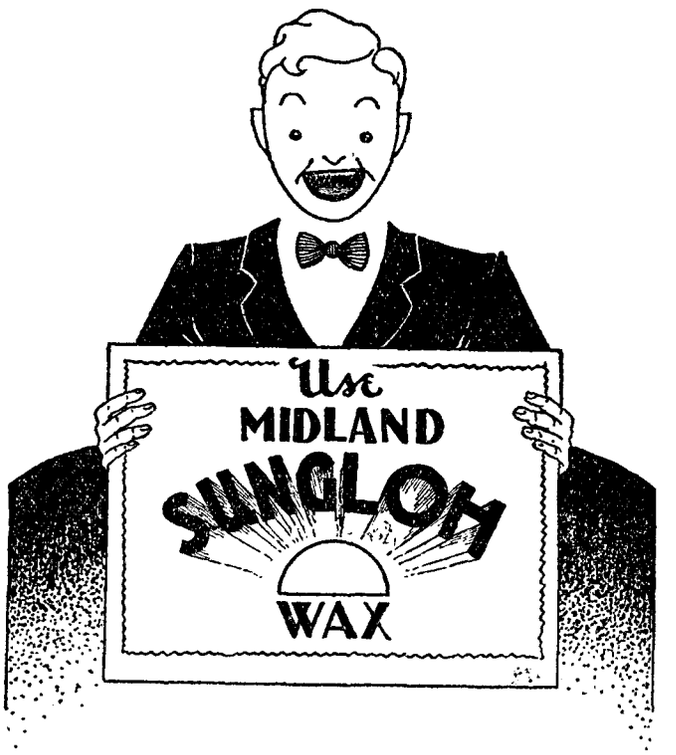
The Blue Flower

The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal, by F. L. Lucas. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

MR. LUCAS'S book is often superficial, sometimes witty, occasionally considered, but never dull. Just observation and a feeling for literature are characteristics of it, but so also are a prolix style and incoherent structure. Observations are not organized—the reader is led through a maze of paths, rather than along the main road of a thesis terminating in a conclusion. Thus, for the first twenty-eight pages he struggles toward a definition of Romanticism and then offers an explanation derived from the Freudian division of personality: in the "Id," the "Super-Ego" and the "Reality Principle"; "The World, the Flesh and the Ideal." He apologizes for this definition: "Much of the Freudian system may be purest moonshine. There is no harm in being sceptical about it, on the contrary. It is indeed essential to say, 'Things work as if this or that were the case—as if there were an unconscious Id, a partly unconscious ego and super-ego.' With all human theories, indeed, it is vital to hold hard to this 'as-ifery.'"

Characteristically enough, he fails to give a more substantial explanation. Then to substantiate this "as-ifery" he presents us with a garland of loose-jointed chapters, or familiar essays, which adorn the subjects. Two chapters—one on "Coleridge, The Romantic Critic," and the

Be Economical



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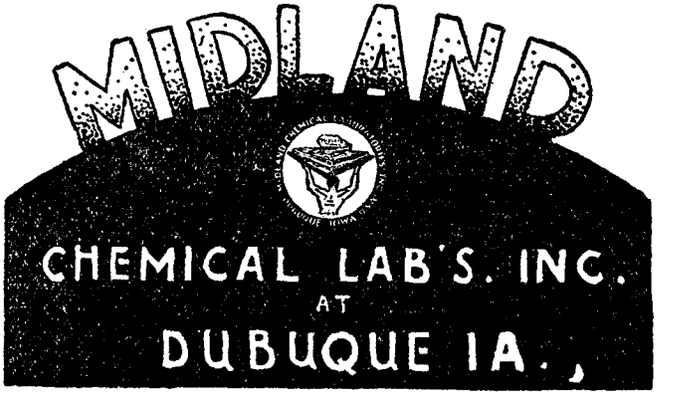

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other on criticism—show Lucas in his strength. His dissection of false values and exposure of the inaccurate pedantries of some contemporary critics is a rare specimen of insight into the chaotic state of criticism today. His attack on the glorification of the obscure, the love of the seemingly profound, but really indefinite, in Coleridge and in his descendants—transcendental and otherwise—is incisive. On the basis of his evidence, and argument derived from it, it would be hard to disagree with his conclusion: that what poses here as criticism is nothing but a kind of misguided religion; a tendency which extends, we may note, to art other than poetry.

After so direct an appraisal of the superficially brilliant, it is a disappointing surprise to see Mr. Lucas revert to form as the English tourist in pursuit of the spirit of the frigid zone. (Most Englishmen, for fear of an empty logomachy, always abhor system.) That he closes with a report of a trip to Iceland, Land of the Sagas, is curiously indicative of a certain obtuseness attendant upon this disorder. Mr. Lucas chooses to overlay his feeling rather than express it and so often becomes banal, but in spite of this and other faults, his book merits reading. "The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal," with all its limitations, is important because the author has had temerity enough to doubt some esoteric literary fashions and to authenticate his doubts with telling evidence.

LINCOLN REIS.

American Foibles

We Liberals, by Nelson Antrim Crawford. New York: Richard R. Smith. $2.00.

THE DUST-COVER describes this as "essentially a book of eccentric facts" which is a misstatement, for the whole point (and delight) in Mr. Crawford's papers is that his facts are nowise eccentric in the sense of peculiar. On the contrary, they are so every-day that it takes the wit and satire of the author to focus our attention on them. Once focused, we laugh at and with our neighbors and ourselves. "We Liberals" is the best piece of light reading come across in a twelve-month.

These random papers have an unusual unity, they are all of a piece; the sceptic intelligence of the writer delights in stripping the shams and pretensions from the Rotary-minded intelligentsia. In "We Liberals" he pokes fun at the parlor pinks; in "Our Master's Voice" our lawyers, legislators and judges are made to look foolish out of their own mouths; "The Muse Afield," "Kansas Language" and "What Is Newspaper English?" give the literary-minded over the forty-eight states—and in particular the Middle West—something to think about. Three more essays analyze the foibles of the colleges and one, perhaps the best, the oddities of Episcopal Church politics. He ends his book with a delightful discussion of "Cats Holy and Profane."

At times the satire is rather deadly. It would not be surprising to find a prominent Episcopal bishop making the same stand against this book as some Catholic clerics made against Doran Hurley's "Monsignor." In "The American Aristocracy" Mr. Crawford discusses the Amer-

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ican "Who's Who"; he laments that it does not provide—as does its English brother—a space for "Recreations." If it did we should find under the name of the author, "teasing Episcopal clergymen, Deans of Women and Fraternity Chapters."

The short-sighted may dislike this book, considering that it makes fun of American institutions. They may even go so far as to consider it subversive. But the wise will realize that these foibles, true and odd as they are, constitute the salt of life, that which gives it flavor. When Mr. Crawford sticks them on a pin and laughs at them—and makes you laugh at yourself—he lifts them from their context. "In nearly all lovers of cats," says the author, "I find a certain contempt for the stupidity of mankind." Mr. Crawford loves cats.

BRYAN M. O'REILLY.

Paradox

Zest for Life: Recollections of a Philosophic Traveller, by Johan Woller; translated from the Danish by Claude Napier. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

EVER since Stevenson wrote "Travels with a Donkey," we have needed a name for that literary genre which is not autobiography, or travel, or familiar essay, yet partakes of the nature and charm of all three. In "Zest for Life" the author recalls memories of days in his native Denmark, in Brussels, Paris, Nice, Venice, Sumatra, long years in Java; but only a suggestion of biographical detail is given, and it is in no sense a guide-book. What he says of Venice is true of all his wanderings: "One should hold strictly to the determination to avoid sightseeing. . . . I sought only in some sunny days and moonlit nights to distil for myself what is the essence of Venice, its long-dead soul. . . ." So it is that he re-creates scenes with the passionate intensity and sincerity of an artist, whether he is describing the Java he loves with such nostalic longing or Gothic cathedrals, their spires like arrows "aimed in an ecstasy of humility at heaven."

The dynamic quality of the book springs from the author's constant recognition of the paradoxical aspects of life. He has heard the "note in the soul wherein all the confused voices of the lust to travel and the longing for home have found their final harmony," and could call the shores of both the Indian Ocean and the North Sea home. He writes dispassionately of the brutal torture and execution of prisoners of war in Sumatra by European officers who carry the poems of Keats in their pockets. He is sensuous in his worship of beauty, ascetic in his insistence that hedonism is sterile, "its inevitable sequence, penitence and shame." He both accepts and scorns the doctrine of the white man's burden, justifying his own work in Java, yet meditating with passionate regret upon the decay of ancient civilizations—even with more passionate loathing upon the mechanized substitute we are imposing.

In this book Dr. Woller gives us "the bitter drink that is the wine of life," a deeper realization of the truth that

"The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide."

LUCILE HARRINGTON.

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War and Childhood

Invasion, by Maxence van der Meersch; translated by Gerard Hopkins. New York: The Viking Press. $3.00.

MAXENCE VAN DER MEERSCH, brilliant young 1936 Goncourt prize-winner, is a man who minces no words. He describes modern competitive industry as a school of "avarice and cruelty and tyranny," a "degrading battlefield." He believes that human beings as a whole do not stand up well under severe adversity and his story of the German occupation of the Lille district is one long series of instances of the personal inhumanity of man toward man. It is also filled with sufferings caused by more impersonal forces—repulsive scenes in prisons, forced-labor camps and prison trains, where innocent youths and young girls are thrown into the closest proximity of street-walkers, hardened criminals and low-lifes generally. It abounds with graphic accounts of a growing destitution that brutalizes beyond belief. "Invasion" is a novel without a central character, but shining through the pages are a few noble souls who rise above their savage surroundings, maintain their personal integrity and minister devotedly to their afflicted fellow men. Because of this honesty and broadness of vision and a lack of animus toward the Germans the book is a more powerful argument against war than most of its contemporaries which decry the hopeless futility of it all and the aimlessness of human existence. Evil and sin are portrayed just as they are; beauty, purity and charity never seemed more attractive or practical. In fact, "Invasion" is a remarkable Catholic novel.

The Ecumenical Councils

The Twenty Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church, by Clement Raab, O.F.M. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $2.00.

THIS very short (214 pages) and very simplified history of the Church's councils and the controversies and dogmas they dealt with, is designed for the hurried cleric or lay student. It gives the present judgment of the councils and does not try to re-create the situations as faced by the participating theologians and administrators. It appears more useful as a quick review and reference than as an introduction. The subject has a sweep and complexity which, confined to so short a summation, seem repeatedly to strain at the restrictions.

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